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A MINORITY WITHIN A MINORITY

Being Bonpo in the Tibetan Community in Exile

YU-SHAN LIU

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Signed Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed entirely by me, the candidate, Yu-Shan Liu. Unless otherwise stated or indicated, the work is all my own, and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed

Abstract

This thesis presents a study of the Bonpo in Dolanji, a Tibetan refugee settlement in North India. The Bonpo are a distinctive religious minority within the Tibetan refugee population. In the 1950s, Chinese Communist forces occupied Tibet and, in 1959, the fourteenth Dalai Lama fled Tibet into exile in India. In 1960, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was established in Dharamsala, and emphasised a 'shared' Buddhist heritage as being central to the Tibetan national identity. This discourse, which represents the Tibetans as being homogeneously Buddhist, effectively marginalised followers of non-Buddhist religions, including the Bonpo. As a result, the Bonpo have been compelled to adapt, whilst resisting the marginalisation of their religious identity and the constraints embedded in their refugee status. Based on twelve months of fieldwork carried out in 2007-2008 in Dolanji, this thesis explores the ways in which the Bonpo engage with their marginality and manipulate the constraints applied to their situation in order to empower themselves. It argues that on the margins, where the boundaries between inclusion and exclusion are contested and negotiable, the Bonpo are permitted some flexibility to create their identity with different 'others,' and to develop new affiliations in order to modify their situation. This thesis unpicks the 'dialogues' the Bonpo have established with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, including their discourse on 'the Bon traditions', the participation of the Bonpo in the Tibetan national community, their relationship with foreign patrons and the Chinese Government, and the representation of the Bon religion in school textbooks. It is contended that the margins provide a consistent energy which feeds the dynamics of social relationships, informing cultural and social change. Today's Bonpo remain situated on the margins of the Tibetan refugee population. However, this thesis demonstrates that in the past decades of exile, the Bonpo have utilised the marginalisation that was forced upon them by multiple 'others' to develop what they claim to be 'Bon traditions', in order to illustrate their distinctive, but equally important, status in contrast to Buddhism within the Tibetan 'national' identity.

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Introduction

> "*We have to be very careful because if something happens, Bonpos would be blamed forever for not taking good care of the Dalai Lama. Other Tibetans already think Bonpos do things differently, and we don't want them to say we are against the Dalai Lama too. Some people in the village say we worry too much, but they should understand, we cannot risk our situation. We have to deal with it with special care.*"

These were the words of Namsay, a 40-year old layman from Dolanji. Located in the foothills of North India, Dolanji is a small settlement where the Bonpo, followers of the Bon religion in the Tibetan refugee community, have settled since 1967. I met Namsay in February 2007, about two weeks after I had arrived in Dolanji. One afternoon when I was drinking Indian sweet tea outside the settlement restaurant, Namsay arrived on his flashy motorbike. He had just come back from Manali, where he had stayed for three months selling winter sweaters. He parked his motorbike and stopped for some tea. Namsay told me that his father had asked him to return to help whitewash the house, in response to an instruction issued from the settlement office to every household in preparation for the Dalai Lama's visit in April. Namsay asked if I had come to Dolanji because of the Dalai Lama. According to him, many people, including foreigners and Bonpos, were planning to come to see the Dalai Lama. I told him that prior to arriving I hadn't known about the visit, but in view of the cautious manner in which the settlement leadership was acting towards the Indian authorities, I thought that the visit of the Dalai Lama seemed only to put more pressure on the settlement. I mentioned how the settlement leadership, led by the Abbot of Menri monastery, had warned foreigners not to walk around too much because Indian police from the district and state authorities would be around beforehand to check settlement security. Foreigners were also asked to be 'polite' and 'respectful', and 'not to talk too much' if they ran into the police. Namsay laughed and explained,

> "*Tibetans are refugees in India. We are guests, not hosts. So we have to respect and obey what Indian police say. We cannot argue with them about their rules. Have you ever seen a guest teach the host what to do and what not do? That would be a very bad guest.*"

However, Namsay added that the current tension experienced by the leadership in respect of the Dalai Lama's visit was not simply due to the community's refugee status. As he emphasised, the leadership was more concerned for the 'situation' of the Bonpo, and how it might be affected negatively if something unexpected and unpleasant happened during the visit of the Dalai Lama. What did Namsay mean by the 'situation' of the Bonpo, and why would the Bonpo have to approach it 'with special care'? What would happen if other Tibetans thought that the Bonpo were against the Dalai Lama?

This is a story of a minority within a minority, and about the marginal within the marginalised. The story is centred on the Bonpo in Dolanji, and how they adapt to multiple factors of marginality which constantly reinforce their powerlessness whilst, at the same time, tending to challenge and change their marginal situation. The Bonpo constitute approximately 3% of the total Tibetan refugees in India. They are distinctive in Tibetan society because their religious identity is different from the majority of Buddhists (*chos pa*[1]). When the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was established in North India in 1959, it emphasised a 'shared' Buddhist heritage as being central to the Tibetan national identity. This vision of Tibet as being uniquely Buddhist marginalised followers of non-Buddhist religions, including the Bon religion. Under Buddhist control, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile declared the Bonpo to be *non-Buddhists* (*phyi pa*, literally the Outsiders), and excluded them from the Tibetan Administration-in-Exile in the 1960s-1970s.

As a result, the Bonpo have been compelled to negotiate their religious affiliation with Buddhism in order to fit into the emerging Tibetan national discourse, whilst simultaneously coping with the marginality applied to, and embedded in, their refugee status. This dual marginality characterised the way the Bonpo lived their lives in the early years of exile; and has affected the ways in which the Bonpo negotiate or express their religious identity, nationhood, and refugee-ness. It was not until 1977 that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile acknowledged the Bon religion as making up the fifth religious tradition of the Tibetans, alongside the four Buddhist

[1] In Tibetan societies, many Buddhists also call themselves *nang pa*, which literarily means 'the Insiders.' However, given that the Bonpo also consider themselves as *nang pa*, and have argued with Buddhists in exile that the Bonpo should be included in the category of *nang pa* (see Chapter IV), I think it is more appropriate to refer to Buddhists as *chos pa* (literarily 'the followers of Buddhism') here, in order to distinguish them from *bon po* ('the followers of Bon').

denominations (the Gelug-pa, Kagyu-pa, Sakya-pa, and Nyingma-pa). With this acknowledgement, a religious representative for the Bon religion was elected to the sixth Commission of Tibetan People's Deputies (CTPD, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile), and the Bonpo have been able to negotiate their marginality from within the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

This research is situated after the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's official acknowledgement of the Bonpo. Namsay's explanations are representative of the fact that, until 2007, the Bonpo remained struggling with their dual marginality – in terms of their refugee status in India and in terms of the way they differentiate, and are differentiated by the majority Tibetans. This prompts us to ask: How do the Bonpo deal with the constraints which are forced on them due to their marginalisation? Do the constraints reinforce their powerlessness within the Tibetan community and in wider Indian society, or are they in effect a galvanising force by which the Bonpo empower themselves?

The margins, which imply an inequality in political, social or geographical relationships in relation to and as defined by the centre, are usually the places where social contradictions are enacted and where boundaries are ambiguous and contested (Green 2005; Tsing 1993). According to this characterisation, the marginalised are considered to be victims of the dominant discourse, and as being powerless to challenge and change their marginal situation. However, while the margins reveal an ambiguity in relation to the dominant community, they are also the places where new affiliations and identities are developed (Horstmann 2006; Matsuoka and Sorenson 2001; Rosaldo 2003). Instead of limiting, the margins permit flexibility in the shaping of identities and create spaces for negotiating the multiple boundaries. Therefore, people on the margins are not always powerless, nor are they necessarily the victims of the dominant society. Rather, they may utilise the contradictions embedded in their marginal position to promote social changes, and manipulate the flexibility existing in boundaries in order to challenge and, sometimes, to change and redefine their relationship with the centre.

Based on twelve-months of ethnographic fieldwork in Dolanji, this thesis aims to illustrate how the Bonpo perceive, continually challenge, and resist the marginal status placed on their Bon identity by the official discourse of Tibetan nationalism

and by their refugee status. It looks into the ways that Bonpo express and negotiate their religious identity, nationhood, and refugee-ness through multiple aspects of marginality. I seek to understand whether or not the constraints associated with their marginality become a means of empowerment by which the Bonpo manipulate resources for their social, political and educational practices, and negotiate their relationship with different 'others.' Through the lens of the Bonpo, this research problematises the stereotype of powerlessness which has usually been associated with people on the margins; it also aims to provide new ways of conceptualising 'traditions,' historical memory, nation-hood, statelessness, and minority-majority relationships. Ethnographically, this study is an attempt to challenge the traditional perception of the Tibetan national identity as being exclusively and homogeneously Buddhist (Cabezón 1997: 13). I suggest that research into Tibetan nationalism should pay more attention to the marginalised, whose expression and experience have been largely neglected, but who have continuously contested and modified the representations of dominant national discourse.

Tibetan Refugees in India

This section will introduce the background of the Tibetan refugees in India. This background is important because it helps us to understand the history of the flight into exile and the context of making a life in India, experiences which the Bonpo in Dolanji have shared with the Buddhist majority in the Tibetan refugee community. It is within this broader context of marginalisation as Tibetan refugees that the Bonpo's negotiation for recognition of their religious identity has developed, and can be understood. The discussion will briefly review the history of invasion and flight, the establishment of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the situation of being refugees in India, the concepts of 'Tibet' and 'Tibetans', and the creation of religious minorities through the national discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. I recognise the dilemma in representing history, and the problematic relationship between historical narratives and 'realities' (McGranahan 2005, 2010; Powers 2004; Rosaldo 1989). As Power has proposed, "History is not static; it changes in accordance with shifting perceptions and changing needs" (2004: 155). In this thesis, in both the debates between the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Chinese Government over their political rights in Tibet, and between Bonpo and Buddhists over their religious roles in representing a Tibetan identity, protagonists have adopted 'histories' in order to

legitimate their assertions of identity. In their historical narratives, 'what had really happened' is usually interpreted differently, given that they are aiming to fulfil different needs. Given that this thesis is an ethnography based upon the perspective of the Bonpo within the Tibetan refugee community, I think it is important to present what the Tibetan exiles have narrated about the Chinese invasion and the process of exile. Therefore, the historical review I present here may resemble more closely history as it is narrated by Tibetan exiles, rather than the version articulated by the Chinese government. Moreover, the same concern is also applied to the literary sources which I draw upon to introduce the Bon religion and its adherents later on. The sources on which I rely may be considered as being arguably biased in favour of the Bonpo, rather than the Buddhists. However, I will put the historical version of the Bonpo in the spotlight, and provide Buddhist narratives by way of contrast.

Background: the Invasion of China and Flight into Exile

In 1949, the Communist Party, which arose in China in the 1920s, defeated the Kuomingtang party (KMT), whose leadership fled into Taiwan and established a separate government there. The Communist Party soon gained control over most of China and established its government, the People's Republic of China (PROC), in October of the same year. From 1950, the People's Liberation Army (PLA, the army of PROC) began to move toward Amdo (Northeastern Tibet) and Kham (Eastern Tibet), and in October, defeated the army of the Lhasa Government in Chamdo, Western Kham (Goldstein 1989: 690-697). From Chamdo, the PLA continued pushing toward Lhasa, and, before entering Lhasa, the Chinese leadership asked to negotiate with the Lhasa Government.

The negotiations between the Lhasa Government and the PROC resulted in the Seventeen Point Agreement treaty on 23 May 1951 (Goldstein 1989: 737-772). In the treaty, the Tibetan representatives relinquished independence and the Chinese leadership agreed to maintain cultural and political autonomy in the areas ruled by the Lhasa Government, which largely corresponded to today's Tibet Autonomous Region (Goldstein 1994; Smith 1994). This treaty protected the area governed by the Lhasa Government (including the entire Central Tibet and Western Kham) for several years from the intrusion of the PLA, while the rest of Kham and Amdo underwent forced 'liberation.' Thousands of people in Kham and Amdo lost their lives in their

resistance to the PLA, particularly in Kham, where people continuously organised armed revolts right up until the early 1970s (McGranahan 2005, 2010). However, for most of the people in U-Tsang (Central Tibet), the protection offered by the Seventeen Point Agreement did not last long. The promises made by the PROC in the 1951 treaty were never put into practice. Rather, it was the PROC Government's intention that Chinese troops would ultimately wrest control of the whole area from the Lhasa Government.

From 1959, the PLA approached Lhasa again, and requested another meeting with the Dalai Lama alone (the Dalai Lama 1962). The meeting was withdrawn after the Tibetan population in Lhasa tried to stop the Dalai Lama from leaving Norbu Lingkha, his summer residence in Lhasa. The gathering of Tibetans outside Norbu Lingkha soon became an uprising against Chinese power, and tensions rose between the Lhasa Government and the PROC. Outside Lhasa, Chinese troops were preparing to use armed force to take over the Lhasa Government. Given the severity of the situation, the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa on 17 March 1959, crossing the border into India.

As soon as the Dalai Lama arrived in India, he met with the Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who agreed to grant asylum to about 80,000 Tibetan refugees, and help them to establish a new life in India. The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), which functions as the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, was established by the Dalai Lama in 1959 in Mussoorie, and moved to Dharamsala in 1960. The Government of India distributed some land to the CTA, which was given authority to establish settlements for the Tibetan refugees and to form the administration for those settlements. Until 2010, there were 39 settlements in total all over India, under the administration of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Given that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has acted as the head of the Tibetan population in exile since 1959, and played an important role in every aspect of the lives of Tibetans in India, the next part will briefly introduce the structure of this institution.

The Tibetan Government-in-Exile

In an attempt to promote an image of Tibet as a 'modern' society, the CTA was largely structured in accordance with 'democratic' principles, and with reference to

the Government of India. Under the Dalai Lama, who acts as the head, the main body of the CTA is divided into three: the Cabinet (also called Kashag), the Supreme Justice Commission, and the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (officially the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies). The Cabinet, which acts as the highest executive body, leads seven departments, including the Department of Home Affairs, Department of Education, Department of Security, Department of Finance, Department of Religion and Culture, Department of Health, and Department of Information and International Relations.

The Department of Home Affairs is in charge of issues associated with the Tibetan settlements. The Department of Education (DOE), with assistance from the Government of India, builds and runs schools for the Tibetan refugees in India, and publishes school textbooks. The Department of Security is responsible for the security of the Dalai Lama and the officials of the Government-in-Exile. The Department of Finance administers government spending and organises the distribution of aid from international organisations, as well as taxes received from Tibetans living in India and other countries. The Department of Religion and Culture looks after the monasteries and nunneries built by the five religious denominations (Bon and four Buddhist denominations) in exile, supports monastic education, and provides legal certification for the completion of dialectic training in each monastery. The Department of Health builds and runs health care centres and hospitals in the Tibetan settlements. Finally, the Department of Information and International Relations helps support the networks between Tibetans dispersed in different countries, and acts as a medium between Tibetan exiles and their foreign patrons.

These departments are all subordinated to the Cabinet, which comprises the Prime Minister (called Kalon Tripa, the executive chief) and seven ministers of the departments (Kalon). The Prime Minister is elected directly by the Tibetan exiles. After taking up the post, the Prime Minister nominates ministers for each department, and agreement for these appointments must be sought from the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, whose members are also elected by the exiled population, oversees the proposals of the Cabinet and the running of the departments. In 1960, when the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was just newly established, the first election of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile was organised. At that time, 13 members were elected, including representatives from three regions

(U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo) and four Buddhist denominations (the Gelug-pa, Kagyu-pa, Sakya-pa, and Nyingma-pa). As noted, the representatives of the Bon religion were absent, given that in the 1960s-1970s the Bon religion had not yet been recognised by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. It was not until 1977 that a representative of the Bon religion was added to the Parliament-in-Exile. In 2007-2008, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile comprised 46 members, among whom 43 members were elected by the Tibetan exile population, and 3 were nominated by the Dalai Lama. The 43 members included 10 representatives for U-Tsang, 10 for Kham, 10 for Amdo, 2 representatives from each of the five religious traditions, and 3 representatives from the Tibetan populations in Europe and North America (2 from Europe and 1 from North America).

As reflected by the structure of the parliament in 2007-2008, it is important to note that, over the decades, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has adapted to the transnational context of exile by defining the membership of the Tibetan nation in terms of people's ethnicity, rather than by clear-cut physical boundaries. In terms of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, membership of the Tibetan nation is signified by possession of a document called the Green Book (also called Freedom Book), issued by the CTA. Those who hold a Green Book are counted by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile as 'citizens of Tibet'[2] and have the right to vote and stand as candidates in the elections for Prime Minister and for membership of the Parliament-in-Exile (Falcone & Wangchuk 2008: 173-175). Apart from electoral rights, Tibetans who hold a Green Book are also obliged to pay an annual 'voluntary tax' (*dang lang cha trel*) (*ibid.*: 174) to the CTA. It should be noted that, by issuing Green Books to the Tibetans dispersed in different countries, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile not only maintains its validity as head of the Tibetan population in exile, but also maintains a transnational network for the expression and experience of a Tibetan national identity, as it emerges and develops in the context of exile. In so doing, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile creates an alternative space representative of its national authority both within and out with national geographical boundaries (Clifford 1994: 308; Gilroy 1987).

[2] People who meet the criterion of Article 8 (Citizens of Tibet) of the Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile can apply for Tibetan citizenship from the CTA. The Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile, adopted by the Assembly of the Central Tibetan Administration-in-Exile on 14 June 1991, has functioned as the constitution of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (http://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/tibet/tibet6.1.html).

Being Refugees in India

Although Green Books function to mark the 'citizenship' of a Tibetan national in a transnational context, they are not regarded as legal documents by the Government of India or by other countries. For Tibetans residing in India, the Registration Certificate (RC) and Identity Certificate (IC), both issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of the Government of India, are the only documents which give Tibetans the legal right to continue living in India and to apply for visas abroad. It is important to note that although in theory, Tibetans born in India are allowed to seek citizenship from the Government of India, in practice, their application would never be approved but would be rejected (Falcone & Wangchuk 2008). Afraid that Tibetans may gradually lose their ethnic ties if they become Indian citizens, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has an unwritten agreement with the Government of India, prohibiting Tibetans from holding Indian citizenship. However, as Falcone & Wangchuk have noted, this strategy has been criticised by some Tibetans, given that to seek citizenship from other countries, in particular, countries in Europe and North America, is usually encouraged by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Under this unwritten agreement, when Tibetans born in India reach the age of 18, they are granted RC, which allows them residential rights in India. However, the RC is only valid for one year, and is required to be renewed annually through the district superintendent of police in the area where the Tibetan resides. The RC acts as an identity card for Tibetan refugees, and Tibetans have to carry this certificate when they travel between settlements and within India. If they want to go abroad, they have to use the IC, which is usually valid for 10 years after being issued, and is equivalent to a passport. Before going abroad, Tibetans have to inform the district police office and seek permission to leave and return. Moreover, in order to return to India, they have to apply for a visa through the Indian Embassy in the country they have visited, given that Tibetans do not possess Indian citizenship, only temporary residential rights. The complex processes which are involved in maintaining their lives in India and their movement across state boundaries, have meant that many of my informants describe every country as a 'foreign' country for Tibetan refugees, even India where many of them were born and grew up.

With the absence of Indian citizenship, Tibetans in India are not allowed to vote or

participate in the elections held by the Government of India. Moreover, they are not permitted to own property or land, and are not eligible to apply for jobs within the Government of India. Therefore, most Tibetans either seek employment in the institutions set up by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, such as schools, libraries and research centres, or set up their own business. A large number of Tibetans in India make their living by running restaurants and guesthouses, selling winter sweaters, or making and selling Tibetan handicrafts, such as traditional woven carpets and ornaments. In some settlements (mainly in South India), where the land is flat and suitable for farming, agriculture usually becomes the dominant mode of life for Tibetan settlers.

As for education, since 1960, the Government of India has assisted the Tibetan Government-in-Exile to build separate schools for Tibetans. The Central Tibetan Schools Administration (CTSA), which was established under the Government of India and is comprised of Indian officials and Tibetans from the Department of Education, is responsible for building and running the Tibetan schools. Tibetan schools under the CTSA are known as Central Schools for Tibetans (CST). As I will describe in Chapter V, the CST schools have adopted Tibetan textbooks prescribed by the DOE, and English language textbooks as prescribed by the NCERT (National council for Educational Research and Training) for Indian schools. This dual system of textbooks reflects how the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has attempted to maintain a Tibetan identity in exile, while at the same time ensuring that its students acquire sufficient knowledge for life in Indian society.

A Note on the Terms 'Tibet' (bod) and 'Tibetans' (bod pa)

Before we move on to the official discourse of Tibetan nationalism, it is important to note that in this thesis, the terms 'Tibet' and 'Tibetans' will be used in accordance with the definitions of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. On the official website of the CTA,[3] it is stated that "the term TIBET here means the whole of Tibet known as Cholka-Sum (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo)." Cholka-Sum (*chol kha sum*), which literally means three regions or three provinces, has been adopted by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile as the official designation marking the territorial boundary of the Tibetan nation (Figure 1). U-Tsang, covering the central and western parts, is also

[3] http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php?id=8&rmenuid=8 (on 2 September 2010)

called Central Tibet; Kham, the eastern portion, is Eastern Tibet, and also called Do-toe; and Amdo, the north-eastern portion, is North-eastern Tibet, or Do-med. According to Article 8 of the Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile,[4] 'citizens of Tibet' are people whose place of birth or place of origin, through biological parents or ancestors, is within the Cholka-Sum. 'Tibet', in this sense, denotes an association with the past, and with congruent 'political' and 'ethnographic' boundaries (Goldstein 1994: 77-79; Richardson 1984: 1-2). It is with this concern that the Tibetan national identity, on which this thesis is centred, has been narrated and understood by Tibetan exiles, and by many international institutions and non-governmental organisations campaigning for an independent 'Tibet'. However, it should be noted that this claim, which asserts a congruence of 'political' and 'ethnographic' boundaries for Tibet prior to the invasion of China in the 1950s, has only recently developed with the emerging discourse of Tibetan nationalism.

Figure 1. Map of Tibet as asserted by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile[5]

The distinction between an 'ethnographic' Tibet and a 'political' Tibet is proposed by Hugh Richardson (1984: 1-2) in an attempt to clarify the ambiguities embedded in the notion of 'Tibet', which may sometimes have been ignored by the academy (see also Goldstein 1994: 77-79). According to Richardson, the 'ethnographic' Tibet is where "people of Tibetan race once inhabited exclusively and where they are still in the majority" (Richardson 1984: 1-2; Goldstein 1994: 77). This is designated as

[4] See http://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/tibet/tibet6.html (2011).
[5] Source: http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php?id=13&rmenuid=8 (the official website of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, 2011).

Cholka-Sum. People residing in these three regions share a largely similar culture and have developed close ties with each other through their religious beliefs and economic activities. However, within this general similarity, people are also diverse in terms of their regional dialects, dress and local customs (Cech 1987, 1993; Houston & Wright 2003; Lopez 1998: 197; Norwak 1984; Samuel 1982, 1993a; Stoddard 1994; Thargyal 2001). Based on these diversities, people of the same region developed a strong affiliation in terms of their regional identification. Therefore, people from Kham called themselves Kham-pa (*khams pa*), and people from Amdo were Amdo-wa (*a mdo pa*). People residing in U-Tsang were usually called Tibetans (*bod pa*).

Before China's invasion in the 1950s, the people of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo were seldom under the same political control (Anand 2000: 274; Goldstein 1994; Houston & Wright 2003: 222; Kolas 1996: 53; Richardson 1984; Samuel 1982: 221, 1993a; Smith 1994). As defined by Richardson (1984), the 'political' Tibet refers only to the whole region of U-Tsang and Western part of Kham, which fell under the rule of the Lhasa Government (*sde ba gzhung*). The Lhasa Government gained political power in U-Tsang from 1642 when the fifth Dalai Lama, Lobsang Gyatso, unified U-Tsang (and some parts of Kham and Amdo) under the control of the Gelug-pa, and established his government in Lhasa (Karmay 2005b; Richardson 1998: 426-8). The Lhasa Government ended in 1959 when the fourteenth Dalai Lama and his cabinet fled into exile. Before 1642, the areas of U (the eastern portion of U-Tsang) and Tsang (the western portion) had only been united in the seventh and eighth centuries, when the Yarlung Dynasty, originating in U, conquered the kingdom of Zhangzhung, which had been dominant in the Tsang area (Karmay 1998: 116; Rossi 1999; Samuel 1993a: 49-51).[6]

The Yarlung Dynasty, which emerged from a tribe in the Yarlung valley, became influential in Central Asia after it defeated the kingdom of Zhangzhung. In the official discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile today, the Yarlung Dynasty is central to the narrative of Tibetan national history. Its importance to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile stems principally from its status as the first regime to rule the

[6] The unification of these two regions under the Yarlung Dynasty has been regarded as a significant achievement in Tibetan history. In the later textual materials of Tibetan history (both of Bon and Buddhism), the Yarlung Dynasty was usually designated as the Tibetan kingdom or the Tibetan empire (*bod rgyal khab*).

whole region of U-Tsang. Indeed, the origin of the term 'Tibet' (*bod*) is associated with this newly emerged empire, over time also extending to the region of U-Tsang. Another reason lies in the fact that it was during the eighth century, at the time of the Yarlung Dynasty, that Buddhism was introduced into Tibetan society, and adopted by the kings of Yarlung as the country's official religion.

The Yarlung Dynasty ended in the ninth century when the empire fell apart, and a long term civil war between different local rulers began. It was not until the seventeenth century when the fifth Dalai Lama, with the help of a king of Mongols, Gushri Khan (Goldstein 1989: 1; Karmay 2005b; Richardson 1998: 426-8), defeated his rivals in the Tsang area and in Western Kham, that the entire region of U-Tsang fell under the same political control again. However, it should be noted that even in the most influential periods of Yarlung and of the Lhasa Government, the political regimes in Central Tibet only briefly extended their control over the entire regions of Kham and Amdo.[7] Until the 1950s, Kham and Amdo were mostly under different rulers from local tribes and chiefdoms. Although many of these local rulers had maintained a close religious relationship with the Lhasa Government, the exact nature of their political relationship with the Lhasa Government remains debatable. When the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was established as the continuation of the former Lhasa Government, it declared Tibet to be an independent nation, its political boundaries congruent with its ethnographic boundaries (Cholka-Sum), and that it had existed as such prior to the invasion of the Chinese army in the 1950s. Since then, Tibet has been used by Tibetan exiles to denote a national concept, which all at once includes U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo.

The Official Discourse of Tibetan Nationalism and Creation of Religious Minorities

As noted, prior to 1959, the former Lhasa Government was controlled mainly by a Buddhist denomination, the Gelug-pa, whose lineage holder, the Dalai Lama, had

[7] In around the eighth century, the rule of Yarlung did extend its control to the Chinese border (Richardson 1998: 167-175, 207-214; Smith 1996: 66-80). However, the exact extent of the kingdom of Yarlung's direct political power at that time still requires further investigation of the historical records on both 'sides'. Also, although the rule of the fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century did extend to the regions of Kham and Amdo, the effectiveness of his political control in these areas remains a matter of debate (Richardson 1998).

acted as the political and religious leader of the government since 1642. When the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was established, it was still under the control of figures from the former Lhasa Government. This group of aristocrats and senior monastic figures, who became dominant in the construction of Tibetan nationalism, placed their own U-Tsang regional identity, and their Gelug-pa religious affiliation, at the centre of official discourse (Cech 1987, 1993; Hess 2009: 18-22; McGranahan 2005, 2010). Therefore, 'Tibet', the name for U-Tsang, came to denote the nation as a whole; and the term 'Tibetan' was adopted to refer to the 'citizens' of the nation. Additionally, the religious belief of Buddhism became the main device by which the Tibetan Government-in-Exile expressed the distinctiveness of Tibetan culture, and what it meant to be a Tibetan.

This discourse of nationalism was also reflected in the structure of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in the 1960s-1970s, which delineated in practical terms those who were included and excluded from participation in national affairs. Therefore, the four Buddhist denominations, whose followers made up the majority of the Tibetans in India, were acknowledged as making up the shared 'Buddhist' heritage of the Tibetan nation. At the same time, non-Buddhist identities, including the Bon religion, Christianity and Islam, were marginalised and left out from the representation of a Tibetan identity (Cech 1987, 1993; Thargyal 2001).

This representation of the official discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile directly impacted on the lives of the Bonpo in the 1960s-1970s. As will be examined early on in this thesis, the Bonpo were compelled to seek help from outside of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, to establish their own settlement and their own monastery in India. Moreover, even after their religious identity was recognised by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the Bonpo continued to struggle with the marginalisation which has characterised many aspects of their lives. For example, on many policies launched by the CTA, the Bonpo were sometimes ignored and excluded. Also, some Buddhist families had forbidden their children to marry a Bonpo, and many Bonpo students experienced overt discrimination from Buddhist classmates and teachers in school. Additionally, it was not until 1994 that the Bonpo religion was represented in textbooks or taught within the school curriculum, in a manner comparable to the four Buddhist denominations.

Much of the research on Tibetan national identity, Tibetan nationalism, as well as the lives of Tibetan refugees (Anand 2000; Bishop 2000; Diehl 2002; Dreyfus 2002; Hess 2009; Houston & Wright 2003; Kolas 1996; Korom 1997a, 1997b; Lopez 1998; McGranahan 2005; Michael 1985; Nowak 1984; Thargyal 2001; Venturino 1996) has focused, from various angles, on the inter-relationship between religious values and political discourse. An examination of Buddhist idioms and symbols shows that these have served to express a Tibetan ethnic and national identity in the context of exile and through various border-crossing practices. However, few of these researchers note that, while promoting the importance of a Buddhist identity in various aspects (cultural, political, ethnic and national) of the lives of Tibetans, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile simultaneously creates minorities who do not fit into this ideology, and who may still contest its legitimacy from within the Tibetan community in exile. Although a number of researchers have recently focused on the marginal position of the Bonpo in their negotiations with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (e.g. Cech 1987, 1993; Karmay 1998; Schrempf 1997), few have addressed the contradictions and the tensions which may have arisen from within the Tibetan community in exile, arising from the Bonpo contestation of a Buddhist-centred Tibetan national identity.

Considering the absence of research on religious minorities within Tibetan refugee communities, I argue that this reflects the fact that not only the Tibetan Government-in-Exile but also Western discourses have played an important role in constructing a Tibetan identity which is exclusively and uniquely centred on a Buddhist identity. In past decades, as noted by some researchers (Bishop 2000; Frechette 2002; Hess 2009; Lopez 1998), the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and Western discourses have developed into a priest-patron relationship. On the one hand, Western research and its discourse of human rights and political rights have provided the exiled Tibetan leadership with the concepts of nation and nationalism, and the notions of democracy and cultural rights. On the other hand, the discourses asserted by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, for example, their pursuit of religious freedom, and the Tibetan way of life which manifests the significance of Buddhism in every aspect, continue to feed the fantasies of ‘Shangri-la’ which have long haunted the Western imagination regarding Tibet and Tibetans (Lopez 1998).

Therefore, while the leadership of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile espouses the

predominance of Buddhist identity in representing the Tibetan nation, non-Tibetan research into Tibetan exiles only seems to reinforce the dominant power of Buddhism in Tibetan society. The marginal situations of non-Buddhist minorities, who are consciously ignored and excluded by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, are also silenced in the academy of Tibetan studies. In view of this, this research aims to provide a different angle from which to understand the way of life of Tibetans in exile. From the perspective of the Bonpo, who are placed on the margins of both Tibetan society in exile and the academic world of Tibetan studies, this research rethinks the role of religion in constructing Tibetan identity and in framing the official discourse of Tibetan nationalism. Moreover, this study aims to draw attention to the research on the marginalised within the Tibetan community in exile. I shall argue that it is from the margins, where people have to struggle to live under conditions determined by the centre, that the contradictions embedded in the dominant discourse and the ambiguities which constantly contest the practice of social relationships can be better approached and observed.

The Bon Religion and Its Adherents

In 2007-2008 when the fieldwork for this research was conducted, more than half of the Bonpo in India resided in Dolanji. The rest were scattered in other Tibetan settlements, where the Buddhist population made up the majority of the settlers. It should be noted that the Bonpo are represented no different to Buddhists in terms of their regional identities. That is, the Bonpo and the Buddhists from U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo share the same regional identities expressed in terms of their local dialects, dress and regional customs. Moreover, prior to exile, regional identities were usually more important than religious affiliations in defining the way the laity (of Bon and Buddhism) interacted with each other (Cech 1987, 1993; Thargyal 2001). Even in exile, in settlements where only Buddhist monasteries are located, the Bonpo laity also go to Buddhist monasteries to do the circumambulation.[8] This may reflect the fact that, from the perspective of the laity, the distinction between Bon and Buddhism is rather subtle and can be easily overlooked.

While Buddhists regard Shakyamuni as the founder of their religion, for the Bonpo

[8] The Bonpo usually circumambulate counter-clockwise, while Buddhists circumambulate clockwise.

that position is held by Tonpa Shenrab. However, Bon and Buddhism share a great many similarities, which are reflected in their religious doctrines and practices (Kværne 1985, 1990, 1995, 2002b; Rossi 1999; Snellgrove 1967). From the tenth and eleventh centuries, when contemporary Bon religion appeared in Tibetan society, these similarities have caused prolonged debates between Bonpo and Buddhist monastic communities, about the authenticity of their respective doctrines. Even today, the argument remains between Bon and Buddhist monks in exile, and it has also influenced recent research on the religions of Tibet by foreign scholars. As a result, knowledge of Bon is usually approached and interpreted differently depending on the perspective, be it Bonpo, Buddhist or foreign scholarship, thus influencing which side is taken, whether Bon or Buddhist. This section will introduce Bon and its history, from the perspective of Bonpo scholars, the Bonpo laity, and foreign scholars of Bon studies.

The Bon Religion in terms of Scholars from the Bonpo Community

This part will introduce the Bon religion from the point of view of Bon literature and the interpretation of contemporary Bonpo scholars. The main Bon textual materials which I am relying on are: 1) *gZi-brjid*, the long version of Tonpa Shenrab's biography (part of which has been translated by David Snellgrove into *The Nine Ways of Bon*, 1967); and 2) *Legs-bshad-mdzod*, a text concerning the history of Bon, part of which has been translated by Samten Karmay into *The Treasury of Good Sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon* (1972). Apart from these sources, my description also depends on works composed by scholars from the Bonpo community, including Lopen Tenzin Namdak (2006), Nyima Dakpa (2005) and Karmay (1972, 1983, 1998, 2005a). All of these scholars have been trained in the Bonpo monastic system, and thus, their perspective reveals how the knowledge of Bon has been asserted and reproduced within the Bonpo monastic community.

Contemporary adherents of Bon usually describe their religion as pre-Buddhist. They believe that their religion originates in the west of Tibet, and flourished in Tibetan societies many centuries before the arrival of Buddhism (Dakpa 2005; Karmay 1972, 1998; Namdak 2006; Snellgrove 1967). In terms of the Bon texts, Tonpa Shenrab

was born in a land called Olmo Lung-ring (*'ol-mo lung-ring*)[9] in 16,017 BC, around 18,000 years ago (Kværne 1985: 3-5, 2002a). It is stated that Tonpa Shenrab is the manifestation of an enlightened Buddha (*sangs rgyas*), who took rebirth in human form to preach the teachings of Bon (Namdak 2006: 4). It is important to note that followers of Buddhism also regard their founder Shakyamuni as an enlightened Buddha. However, the Bon texts date the birth of Tonpa Shenrab to a far earlier period than Shakyamuni (623 B.C.-544 B.C.). Some Bonpo monks from Dolanji consider Shakyamuni to have been the reincarnation of one of Tonpa Shenrab's disciples; for them, this is why the teachings taught by Shakyamuni, to a certain extent, resemble those of Tonpa Shenrab.

Bon texts (Dakpa 2005; Karmay 1972; Namdak 2006; Snellgrove 1967) recount that Tonpa Shenrab once visited the western part of Tibet. It is said that during his visit, Tonpa Shenrab introduced people to new ways of ritual offering, in which pre-existing animal and human sacrifices were replaced with ransom offerings and flour cakes (torma, *gtor ma*, cakes made of flour and butter in different shapes). These forms of offering are still pervasive in Tibetans' daily lives today, among followers of both Bon and Buddhism. According to the Bonpo monks, apart from the practice of offering cakes, many customs, such as the *bsang* ritual (ritual of purification) and prayer flags (lungta, *rlung rta*), which are distinctive in Tibetan cultural areas, were also taught by Tonpa Shenrab.

These teachings, categorised as the lower levels of Bon ("Bon of Cause", Karmay 1972: 18; Snellgrove 1967: 12), cover the practice of prediction (divinations and astrological and geomantic calculations); the practice of visible manifestations (rituals requesting deities for their help); rituals of exorcism (including making ransom offerings to prevent harm by demons and evil spirits); and the practice of exorcism (rituals preventing the dead from harming the living) (Namdak 2006: 15-17). These elements of Bon teaching have been emphasised by Bon monks in

[9] The Bonpo believe that Olmo Lung-ring (also designated as Tazig, *stag gzig*, in some of the Bon texts) is located in the west of the Tibetan plateau. However, its exact location continues to be debated among Bonpo and non-Bonpo historians. Whilst some scholars suggest that Olmo Lung-ring is around Mt Kailash (*ti se* in Tibetan), at the border between Western Tibet and North West Nepal, some consider it to be located in Central Asia, somewhere in current Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Northern Afghanistan (Karmay 1972: xxvii-xxxi, 1998: 104-105; Kværne 1985, 2001; Martin 1999; Namdak 2006: 4-5; Snellgorve 1967). Although arguments persist, it is important to note that Western Tibet, in particular the area around Mt Kailash, has played a crucial role in Bon narratives of their religious development in the pre-Buddhist period. Mt Kailash is believed by the Bonpo to be the capital of the kingdom of Zhangzhung, where the Bon religion flourished and became dominant until the eighth and ninth centuries.

exile as being of particular importance, given that they provide detailed explanations and contexts for Tibetan indigenous heritage, which was prevalent in Tibetan societies before the arrival of Buddhism. The remaining Bon practices and teachings, categorised as "Bon of Effect", are said to have been learnt by Tibetans many centuries after Tonpa Shenrab had passed away (*ibid.*).

In terms of the Bon texts, Bon had been the official religion of the kingdom of Zhangzhung, which thrived in Western Tibet until the seventh and eighth centuries (Karmay 1998; Rossi 1999; Kværne 2001). The teachings of Tonpa Shenrab were said to have been systematically categorised in Zhangzhung and translated into many languages disseminated worldwide. As noted, Zhangzhung was annexed by the Yarlung Dynasty in the seventh century (Karmay 1998: 114; Rossi 1999; Samuel 1993a: 49-51). The Bonpo believe that before Zhangzhung was incorporated into the Yarlung Dynasty, Bon had spread into the Yarlung area during the reigns of its early kings, some of whom were said to be followers of Bon (Kværne 2001). The texts recount that Bonpo priests, who were specialists in divination and funeral rituals, were usually invited from Zhangzhung to Yarlung to teach and perform rituals for royal funerals.

These priests, called Shen (*gshen*) or *bonpo* (*bon po*), appear in both Bon and Buddhist historical texts (Bjerken 2001: 55-56; Karmay 1998: 116-117; Kværne 1985: 3-5, 2002b; Snellgrove 1967: 15; Stein 1972: 230-232). However, the ways in which they are represented are very different. In the Bon texts, *bonpo* priests are shown as the learned masters of Bon, who had translated many Bon doctrines from Zhangzhung into Tibetan. Buddhist texts however, depict these *bonpo* priests as practitioners of black magic or blood ritual sacrifice (see the examination by Bjerken 2001, Karmay 1972, 1998, and Kværne 2001). In Buddhist texts, *bonpo* priests were portrayed as seeking continually to prevent the spread of Buddhism in Tibetan societies, either by poisoning kings who favoured Buddhism, or supporting kings in their persecution of Buddhist followers.[10] Buddhism is said to have been introduced

[10] The most famous example is the description of the last Tibetan king, Lang Darma (*glang dar ma*, r. 838-842) (Karmay 2005a: 15). Buddhist historians have described Lang Darma as a king who was not only against Buddhism but a follower of the Bon religion (*ibid.*). However, by examining the Dunhuang manuscripts recently found in North-western China, Karmay points out that Lang Darma was never a follower of the Bon religion (2005a: 15-29). According to Karmay (and contemporary Bonpo monks), Lang Dharma persecuted all religions during his reign, including Bon and Buddhism. He was said to have done so to prevent religious sects from taking power and becoming the ruling system of the kingdom. Karmay's re-examination of King Lang Darma, however, was prohibited from being published by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile because his representation contradicted Buddhist narratives of Tibetan history (see Bjerken 2001 and Stoddard 1994: 152-153).

in the Yarlung Dynasty during the reign of Songtsan Gampo (618-650 AD) and had become dominant during the time of Trisong Detsen (*khri srong lde btsan*, 755-797 AD).[11] With the support of royal families, Buddhism soon replaced Bon, becoming the dominant religion during the Yarlung Dynasty. In Bon texts, it is stated that Bon experienced several periods of persecution under Buddhist kings from this period onwards (Karmay 1972, 1998).

Karmay's study indicates that an official persecution of the Bonpo occurred in 785 AD (Karmay 1972: 94; 1998: 118). During this persecution, most of the Bon texts were burned or destroyed by Buddhists. Adherents of Bon were forced to choose between converting to Buddhism or moving away from Central Tibet. As a result, many Bonpos moved eastwards into the Kham region and northwards to Amdo, where the Bon religion has remained influential in many villages until today. Some Bonpos, however, fled to the border areas between Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and North India (Cech 1986: 6; Karmay 1972, 1998). Since then, Bon all but vanished in the official account of history for more than a hundred years. As Karmay has maintained, it was not until Shenchen Luga (*gshen chen klu dga'*, 995-1035) rediscovered Bon texts hidden in the mountains in 1017 AD that Bon re-emerged (Karmay 1998: 118).

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Bon, which had almost disappeared between the eighth and ninth centuries, re-emerged under the name Yungdrung Bon (*g.yung drung bon*, which means 'Everlasting Bon') (Dakpa 2005; Karmay 1972). This is the form of Bon religion that informs the beliefs of the Bonpo today. In this thesis, I also refer to Yungdrung Bon as contemporary Bon (Kværne 1985: 3-4) or simply as the Bon religion, in order to differentiate it from the earlier Bon, which almost vanished around the eighth century. This distinction is significant because it is on this point that Bonpo and Buddhists today have argued about the origin of contemporary Bon and its relationship with Buddhism. However, this thesis does not seek to suggest a discontinuity between Yungdrung Bon and the earlier Bon, as emphasised by Buddhists and many non-Tibetan scholars (Powers 1995; Stein 1972; Tucci 1980). Nor is it my intention to provide evidence to support the historical view maintained by Bonpo monastics, who assert that Yungdrung Bon is a continuation of earlier Bon.

[11] Three Yarlung kings, Songtsan Gampo (*srong btsan sgam po*), Trisong Detsen (*khri srong lde btsan*) and Ralpacan (*ral pa can*), also called the three Dharma Kings (*chos rgyal*), are usually credited by Buddhists with playing a key role in introducing and disseminating Buddhist teachings in Tibetan societies.

Instead, my research is aimed at exploring and examining the ways in which contemporary Bonpos manipulate their textual narratives to negotiate their social, political and religious positioning in the Tibetan community in exile.

Yungdrung Bon, which appeared in the tenth and eleventh centuries, presents a great similarity with Buddhism, in particular when it comes to the theories of karma, rebirth, enlightenment, images of deities, and the monastic system (Kværne 2001; Namdak 2006; Rossi 1999; Snellgrove 1967). These similarities have generated a long-term debate between Bon and Buddhist monastics on the authenticity of their respective religious doctrines. The monastics of Yungdrung Bon believe that their religious doctrines had been developed and prevailed in the form of the earlier Bon during the time of the kingdom of Zhangzhung and the Yarlung Dynasty, but acknowledge that many of their early texts had been destroyed by around the eighth century (Dakpa 2005; Karmay 1972, 1998; Kværne 2001; Namdak 2006). In their understanding, when Buddhism arrived in Tibetan society, it incorporated many indigenous elements which had been absorbed and reformed into the practices of the earlier Bon.

For Buddhist monastics, however, contemporary Bon was not connected with earlier Bon, and contemporary Bon came into existence only by borrowing the doctrines and monastic system from Buddhism, which had been widespread in Tibetan societies since the seventh and eighth centuries (Powers 1995: 431-438). Some Buddhists therefore call contemporary Bon the 'translated' or 'plagiarised' Bon (*bsgyur bon*), accusing it of being derivative (Bjerken 2001: 56; Karmay 1998: 161; Kværne 2001: 12). Some, however, called contemporary Bon, White Bon (*bon dkar*), or 'Buddhist' Bon (*bon nang pa*, Bon who follow the same path as Buddhism), in order to differentiate it from the earlier Bon, which was also called Black Bon (*bon nag*), or 'Non-Buddhist' (*bon phyi pa*) in the Buddhist literature.

To conclude, contemporary Bon and Buddhism share many similarities when it comes to philosophy and forms of ritual practice. However, adherents of contemporary Bon believe that their founder is different from Buddhism, and assert that Buddhism has incorporated some elements from the earlier Bon as it developed within Tibetan societies. These Bon-po perspectives have caused many Buddhist monks to consider contemporary Bon as an anti-Buddhist religion and, as such, to

exclude it from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in the 1960s-1970s. Although the Bon religion has from 1977 onwards been acknowledged by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the origins of contemporary Bon and its relationship to Buddhism have remained a subject of debate between Bon and Buddhist communities over the decades since.

The Bon Religion according to the Laity

Before move on to a review of Bon studies in western academia, it is important to note that the ways the Bonpo laity conceptualise the Bon religion and its relationship to Buddhism are slightly different from those of their monastics. While Bonpo monks draw upon textual knowledge to explain differences and similarities between Bon and Buddhism, most of the laity, in particular, the elders, distinguish Bon from Buddhism specifically in terms of their founders, the ways of circumambulation, and the mantras they chant. In many of my conversations with the Bonpo elders in Dolanji, these three main differences were usually brought out when they explained to me what it meant to be Bonpo and how being a Bonpo (*bon po*) was different from being a Buddhist (*chos pa*). Also, for ordinary Bonpo laity, the similarities with Buddhism, for example, in the style of monastic robes, the monastic system, images of deities and forms of ritual practice, usually outnumbered the differences.

As many researchers (Cech 1987, 1993; Karmay 1998; Kværne 2001; Lopez 1998; Thargyal 2001) have noted, prior to exile, the Bon and Buddhist lay populations seldom found it necessary to articulate separate religious identities in their daily lives, given that members of the same local community usually shared the same religious identification. It was not until exile, where Bonpo and Buddhists were mixed together in the Tibetan refugee camps, and when the Tibetan Government-in-Exile excluded the Bonpo from participation in national affairs, that people began to notice the differences between their religious identities. However, for most of the Bonpo laity, the differences between their religious practices and Buddhism are still very subtle and easily confused (Cech 1987, 1993). As I will argue in this thesis, it is only due to the ways in which the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Buddhist majority categorised and treated them, and from the articulations of Bonpo monastics, that the Bonpo laity in exile began to develop a distinctive Bon identity and awareness.

Bon Studies in Western Academia

Until the 1960s, most research into the religions of Tibet relied exclusively on the Buddhist literature, and thereby usually only reproduced images of Bon and its relationship to Buddhism from the perspective of Buddhist monastics. By examining the research dated up to the 1960s, Kværne (1995: 9-10, 2001: 9-10) suggests Bon was generally viewed by Western scholars in terms of three perspectives: (1) as a folk religion which existed prior to the arrival of Buddhism in Tibet, and which was gradually suppressed and replaced by Buddhism; (2) as a religion which developed in the period when Buddhism became influential in Tibet, and which shares many similarities with Buddhism; or (3) as a term referring to the popular beliefs of Tibet, including "divination, the cult of local deities, and the concepts of the souls". It was not until the late 1960s, when many Bonpo monastics fled Tibet into exile, that a number of Western scholars noted that Bon was perceived very differently by the Bonpo themselves (Cech 1987, 1993; Karmay 1972, 1998; Kværne 1995, 2001; Rossi 1999; Skorupski 1981; Snellgrove 1967). Since then, research focusing on the perspective of Bon literature, in order to investigate the origins of Bon and its relationship to Buddhism, has begun to develop in the Western academy.

Snellgrove's *The Nine Ways of Bon* in 1967 marked the beginning of this stage. This work, which was completed with the help of two Bonpo scholars (Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Samten Karmay), is a translation of *gZi-brjid*, the Bon text of Tonpa Shenrab's biography. Snellgrove was one of the pioneers in western academia who have contributed to enabling the voice of the Bonpo to be heard, and who intended to suggest new ways of conceptualising the relationship between Bon and Buddhism. However, given that Bon textual materials were still limited at that time, some of the ideas and perspectives in Snellgrove's work are considered to have been based on speculations (Bjerken 2001; Driem 2001). A few of his suggestions have been adopted by subsequent research into the Bon religion, but some have been revised and re-examined as more and more Bon literature has been discovered and became accessible to both Bonpo and foreign scholars.

Snellgrove suggests that the earlier Bon was an earlier form of Buddhism which had spread from today's Pakistan and Kashmir to Western Tibet, far earlier than the eighth century (1967: 15) (see also Driem 2001: 33). When Buddhism was officially introduced by the Yarlung kings into Tibetan society in the eighth century, it came

into conflict with early Bon, knowledge of which was controlled mainly by a group of priests, and at that time the term 'Bon' meant "priest who invokes" (Snellgrove 1967: 20-21). Bon in this context was regarded by supporters of Buddhism as their main rival in the political and religious spheres. However, Snellgrove maintains that early Bon was different from contemporary Bon, which represents a systematic set of religious practices (cf. 1967: 20-21). Snellgrove suggests that contemporary Bon first emerged in the tenth and eleventh centuries when Buddhism (*chos*) began to categorise its doctrines and develop monasteries as its educational institutions. Given the fact that these two religions had developed within, and shared with each other, the same cultural complex and literary language, they came to share many similarities. As he states, "The development of BON and CHOS were parallel processes, and both *bonpos* and *chos-pas* were using the same literary language within the same cultural surrounding" (1967: 21).

Although denying the connection between contemporary Bon and the earlier Bon, Snellgrove admitted that Bon texts have preserved a large number of early legends and ritual utterances, which were represented through the life stories of Tonpa Shenrab and can be observed in the practices of Bonpo today (1967: 19-20). According to him, these elements can no longer be found in Buddhist literature, having been expunged as a result of later reforms. This caused Snellgrove to conclude that the textual materials of Bon are a better vantage point from which to approach the cultural substratum which has nourished both contemporary Bon and Buddhist denominations in Tibetan societies. Many subsequent researchers have shared Snellgrove's view that the Bon texts have preserved aspects of earlier legends and folk beliefs which may provide access to an understanding of early Tibetan societies and to the distinctiveness of Tibetan culture. For example, Kværne (1985), in his study of Bonpo death rituals, points out that in practice the death rituals performed by Bonpo and by Buddhist monastics today are similar in many ways. However, when it comes to explanatory theories and historical contexts, the descriptions in the Bon texts seem to reflect and retain more aspects of the ancient Tibetan notions of death and the hereafter (1985: 6-8).

Apart from research into the practices of contemporary Bon rituals (Canzio 1986; Kværne 1985; Schrempf 1997, 1999, 2000) and Bon doctrines (Bellezza 2005; Bjerken 2001; Cech 1986, 1992; Martin 1997a, 2000; Rossi 1999), some researchers

(Jacques 2009, Karmay 1998, 2005; Nagano 2009; Nagano & Karmay 2008; Nishi & Nagano 2001; Takahashi 2001; Takeuchi 2009) have made efforts to unravel the area, languages and history of the kingdom of Zhangzhung from Bon texts, and have sought to build insights into the relationship between earlier Bon, contemporary Bon, and Zhangzhung. In general, most foreign researchers have described contemporary Bon as 'organised' or 'systematised' Bon, in order to differentiate it from earlier Bon, which appeared during the Yarlung Dynasty but has left little textual evidence. Although most recent research into Bon refers to Bon literature and to the writings of Bonpo monastics, many maintain that the origins of contemporary Bon and its relationship to Buddhism are still debatable and require a further investigation.

In addition, it should be noted that, despite the rapid growth of Bon studies in recent decades, very little anthropological research has been carried out on topics related to the adherents of Bon. For example, Charles Ramble (1983, 1990) has focused on the Bon and Buddhist communities in Nepal's Mustang region, to understand how ritual performance reflects the ways in which locals perceive different forms of religious traditions, and utilise them in order to cope with social change. Karmay (1998), focusing on a Bonpo village in Amdo, describes how the regular *bsang* ritual (the ritual of purification) played a crucial role in reproducing and re-enforcing the boundaries of the local community.

Among the small number of anthropological works, Krystyna Cech's ethnography (1987, 1993) is the only one concerned with the lives of the Bonpo within Tibetan refugee communities in India. Based on twenty-four months of fieldwork in Dolanji in 1983-1984, Cech's studies examined the ways in which the Bonpo struggled to maintain their religious identity in the years prior to the 1980s. However, although this ethnography provided detailed accounts of the way the first Bonpo generation lived their lives in Dolanji, it played down some aspects which may also have had a crucial impact on the life of settlers, for example, generational differences, schooling, and the interactions between the Bonpo and their foreign patrons. In terms of why these issues seem not to have been addressed by Cech, I suggest that it may reflect the fact that they have only become important in recent years, with rapid social changes from within and outside the settlement affecting the lives of Bonpo.

For example, the second and third generations have grown up over the past twenty

years, and the school in the settlement has been upgraded to the secondary level, which makes schooling a vital aspect in understanding the negotiation of identities. Moreover, with the increase of foreign sponsors who provide funding for the development of monasteries and opportunities for Bonpo monastics to teach their religious knowledge abroad, the Bonpo's relationship with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has also been modified and significantly improved. These changes, which may only have occurred after Cech had finished her fieldwork, have added dynamics, diversity and complexity into the way the Bonpo in Dolanji perceive and negotiate their marginal situation in the Tibetan community in exile. Given these changes, my thesis seeks to fill this gap in our understanding of the lives of the Bonpo in Dolanji over the past 20-30 years, and also to consider aspects of Bonpo marginalisation which may have been downplayed by Cech, for example, generational difference and the issue of education.

Mapping the Research in the Anthropological Context

The Role of Religion in Maintaining a Sense of Community

In this research, religion forms an important focus, a locus through which both the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Bonpo construct their identity, seeking to maintain a sense of community against being marginalised and fragmented in the exiled and national contexts. However, this raises the question: why religion, and what does religion mean in the context of this research? More specifically, when the term 'religion' is used or interpreted by informants in this research, does it refer to "a set of sectarian precepts" (Ramble 1990: 185) which are codified in the textual materials, or is it merely a notion used to distinguish a way of life from the life of 'others'? Moreover, if it is perceived as a way of life which delineates the boundaries of a community, in what ways and in what forms is this idea of 'religion' manifested? Is it in the performance of ritual, in which one can discern those who participate from those who are excluded? Or is it embedded in the daily routine, defining the way people behave, the way they view the world, and the way they interact with others?

Religion as a subject of study has grown in anthropology since the nineteenth century when anthropology first emerged as an academic discipline. However, most of the early researchers viewed religion from the perspective of evolution. They looked for 'primitive' forms of religion in societies which they thought represented the farthest

(and earliest) developmental point in contrast to modern societies. Therefore, Tylor (1958[1871]) argued that religion was manifested in a belief in "spiritual beings" (1958: 9). Durkheim (1915) however, by examining totemism in Australia, suggested that a religion is a system which separates the sacred from the profane, and conflates the former with the social.

From the nineteen sixties, anthropological research into religion shifted the focus from social functions and structure to the way people understand and express the meanings of religion (Eriksen 2001: 211). Geertz, for example, suggested that religion can only be approached as "a system of symbols" (1973: 90). According to him, religion manifests the way a society views the world. Through the symbols which serve as vehicles for meanings, religion formulates conceptions of the order of existence and represents them in a uniquely realistic form, through which people feel and comprehend their world (1973: 90). Although suggesting that religion only gains its meanings from the local, Geertz's theories maintain that there exists a universal form of religion. This perspective has been criticised since the nineteen eighties, when many ethnographers began to rethink the ambiguities of terms, such as religion, kinship, and politics, which emerged in the Western context but had been adopted to understand societies existing outside this context.

However, it is important to note that nowadays, the usage of certain terms, such as religion, is no longer limited to what were once categorised as 'Western' societies. Rather, in many societies once categorised as non-Western, the term 'religion' is also used by people on a daily basis, for example, in the media, in political discourse, and in people's everyday conversations. This may reflect the impact of globalisation and also, the development of technologies, such as television and internet, which help to translate and disseminate information worldwide. However, the implications of globalisation also indicate that research into religion has to engage with the broader context of transnational networks, which provide idioms and may also serve the meanings contained in local networks (Appadurai 1991; Clifford 1994).

Moreover, I argue that it is within this global and transnational impact that the diversities stemming from the local become mostly visible (Matsuoka and Sorenson 2001: 10). Also, the category of 'religion' has been adopted by many communities as a means of empowerment by which they assert a distinctive cultural and historical

heritage, and claim their political rights against being marginalised by and assimilated into the dominant society. As Chong (1998) has observed in her study of Korean Americans, their participation in ethnic church activities has served as an important means by which the second generation experience and express their distinctive ethnic ties, and by which they challenge the marginalities and negative images applied to their Korean ethnicity by larger society. This brings us to the context of the Tibetan exiles and the Bonpo community within it. I suggest that the notion of religion, or more specifically, the rhetorical distinction in terms of being a Bonpo and being a Buddhist, has gained a very different meaning with the advent of life in exile.

In one of his studies of the Buddhist and Bon communities in Mustang, Ramble (1990) examined the notion of Buddhism (and Bon) in the practices of local traditions. As he has concluded, if we wanted to find Buddhism (or Bon) in the Buddhist (Bon) communities, we will find it only within the context of its interaction with other forms of tradition on the periphery. He argues that in these two communities, Buddhist and Bon precepts and practices are interlinked with many local traditions which have become woven into the life of the communities over centuries. According to him, these various forms of traditions became mutually incorporated into one another, and provided the communities with a diversity of resources by which they adapted to social changes. Ramble's finding in Mustang may explain the role of Buddhism and Bon in the local communities in Tibet prior to 1959, given that it assumes a relatively stable environment for the development of communities. As a number of researchers have noted (Bellezza 2005; Blondeau 2000; Karmay 1998, 2000; Smith 1996: 47-51; Stuart & Banmadorji & Huangchojia 1995), in many of the villages in U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo, it was the belief in the mountain deities and the regular practice of mountain cults, which had prevailed in Tibetan societies before the development of Bon and Buddhism, that had served as vital elements in the expression of belonging and in local community ties.

However, I suggest that since the Tibetan resettlement in exile, where monasteries are 'reconstructed' and have become the embodiment of cultural heritage, it is the religious literature and interpretative traditions of Bon and Buddhism which have become the dominant means by which people represent and negotiate their group identity. Although the previous forms of tradition, such as the belief in natural spirits

and regional divisions, remain an important part of people's lives in exile, in particular, among the first generation, I suggest that many of the local traditions have been gradually subordinated to a sectarian understanding of religion, either Bon or Buddhism, which serves as an effective means to the express identity in the transnational context. As I shall argue in this thesis, in the Tibetan diaspora, 'religion' is not only manifested in people's daily routines, for example, in their daily circumambulation, their recitation of mantras, and in the ceremonies held by the monasteries. Rather, it has been categorised into a form of textual knowledge and represented in school textbooks, from which the second and third generations 'learn' what religion means and how to live life as a Tibetan in terms of religious precepts (Kolas 1996).

Negotiations from the Margins

Apart from religion, another important theme of this research is about the way people engage with their marginality and experience the state and nation from the margins. Margins can be understood as a social concept, referring to those marginalised by the state or national powers, or as a geographical concept, denoting places in the borderlands. Anthropology has usually been characterised as a discipline which engages with people and places on the margins. However, it seldom takes up the margins as a subject of study in order to investigate what makes people marginalised, or how culture, state and nation are perceived from the margins (Green 2005; Horstmann and Wadley 2006; Rosaldo 2003).

It was not until the past two decades, when anthropological works (e.g. Appadurai 1991; Clifford 1994, 2001; Harrell-Bond & Voutira 1992; Malkki 1992, 1995a, 1995b) started to reflect the importance of transnational and national factors in shaping the lives of local communities and conceptualising people 'on the move' (Dielh 2002: 7), that studies centring on marginality and the margins started to grow. Much research has therefore been conducted among ethnic minorities (Gladney 1998b; Rabinowitz 2001; Sa'ar 1998), migrants (Chong 1998; Fuglerud 1999), and refugees (Clifford 1994; Harrell-Bond & Voutira 1992; Malkki 1995a, 1995b; Matsuoka and Sorenson 2001) to understand how the margins are manifested through the way people protest their social and political exclusion, and negotiate to have their voices heard by the central state powers. Some (e.g. Chou 2006; Green 2005; Horstmann 2006; Rosaldo 2003; Sprenger 2006; Tirtosudarmo 2006) however, look

at the borderlands as a cultural arena, and investigate how borders shape people's experience in their daily practices, and how people manipulate resources from border-crossing practices to express their belonging.

Focusing on the Palestinians in Israel, Rabinowitz (2001) illustrates how a 'trapped minority' experiences marginality twice over: once within the Israeli state because of their Palestinian identity, and again on a transnational scale by their mother nation, in which they are considered as disloyal to their Palestinian affiliation by possessing Israeli citizenship. Sa'ar (1998), by narrowing her focus to the Palestinian Christians in Haifa, explores how people on the margins utilise the constraints imposed on them by the state and nation as resources of empowerment to gain maximum benefit from the lives which they have to live. Fuglerud's study of the Tamil migration (1999), shows a migrant population struggling within various forces of domination and subordination, and negotiating to retain their voices within the complex web of power relations.

Unlike those ethnic minorities and immigrant communities which experience marginalisation within the norms of the nation-state and which struggle to retain their identities alongside these norms, refugees do not conform to state imposed norms and often have no intention of doing so. This characteristic has often caused refugees to be conceptualised as dangerous, ambiguous and anomalous, as "matter out of place" (Douglas 1966: 33) in a world in which systems of nation-states define the essentials of identities and norms of social relationships. If the margins are manifested through an experience of exclusion, refugees, who cannot be pinned down to any country on a world map, are marginalised by the fact they live their lives in the interstices of the system of nation-states (Malkki 1995a). Malkki's ethnography (1995a) of two groups of Hutu refugees in Tanzania describes how refugees of a dispersed population develop different strategies to negotiate their lives around their marginality. As she has noted, to resist their marginality and exclusion within the nation state, some refugees actively and strictly maintained boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, as in the case of camp refugees; while some 'denaturalised' the interconnection between identity and place, as in the case of the town refugees. From a similar perspective in which exile is examined as a means of empowerment, Matsuoka and Sorenson (2001), in their research into refugees from Horn of Africa in Canada, argue that refugees are not always powerless. Rather, they manipulate

resources across international borders to maintain a long-term nationalism, in which identities are constituted through the myths of 'home' and 'return,' and the life of the present manifests via a continuous engagement with the past, and with what happen in the homeland.

Reflecting on these studies which engage in marginality from different approaches, it is important to note that one of the ambiguities and uncertainties defining people and places on the margins is their lack of boundaries (Green 2005: 4). Although various factors of differentiation may be drawn upon by the marginalised and their state authorities in addressing their exclusion and to explain their experience of marginality, the boundaries which describe included and excluded are usually fluid and difficult to define. Among these cases, refugees may be considered to be marginalised from a clear-cut definition of state boundaries. However, I argue that, given their different involvement in social, political and economic activities in their host societies and across international borders, the boundaries demarking who is and is not a refugee are sometimes ambiguous, as in the case of town refugees in Malkki's ethnography (1995a), and also, in the case of Tibetan refugees who are dispersed in different countries.

As this research shall argue, there is also the ambiguity inherent in the boundaries between Bonpo and Buddhists, and their struggle against the silence and subordination imposed on them by the Buddhist majority within the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. As Green (2005) has suggested, this experience of an ambiguous identity and of being invisible in a larger society, marks out the main characteristic of the margins. In addition, given the fluidity and instability of the boundaries between Bonpo and Buddhist identities, the margins are also places where transformation and transmission of different forms of identities can most effectively be observed. Therefore, the reinvention of identities and the development of new associations and affiliations are central topics in anthropological studies of the margins (Chong 1998; Green 2005; Matsuoka and Sorenson 2001; Tsing 1993).

Much of the research done on the marginalised has focused on making the marginal central, and highlighting the position of those who are mostly neglected, within and outside the academy (Green 2005). This is also the principal purpose of my research. However, I argue that, similar to Tibetan studies, many researchers may be unaware

that they are also involved in a process of making and remaking the centre and the margins within a marginalised population. Reflecting on this issue, I suggest that the researcher should be cautious and mindful of who they represent and who they effectively neglect. I have sought to apply this awareness to my research, though, to a certain extent, it may also reflect the limitations of this study. As will be found, when discussing the negotiations of the Bonpo with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, much of this research relies on the narratives expressed by monastics, who act as the leadership and the representatives of the Bonpo community. Although I have tried to maintain a balance by drawing also upon reactions and accounts from laity of different generations, there remains a bias in terms of focusing heavily on the perspectives of Bonpo monastics.

Apart from the limits placed by the methodology, which will be discussed in the next section, one of the reasons this research has been conducted and presented in this way, is because it reflects the fact that monastics have played a crucial leadership role in the negotiation of Bon identity in exile. As many Bonpo laity have stressed, it was due to the efforts made by their monastic clergy that the position of the Bonpo within the Tibetan community in exile has been significantly progressed and improved. Moreover, as reflected in my interviews with the laity, especially second and third generation, the ways in which they perceive their Bon identity and interpret the role of Bon in terms of Tibetan national identity, are significantly influenced by the narratives generated by Bonpo monks. Given this situation, I believe that focusing on the ways that monastics construct knowledge in respect of Bon identity, and transmit that knowledge to younger generations of Bonpo laity, provides this research with a valuable vantage point from which to understand the contradictions embedded in the Bonpo's positioning within the Tibetan community in exile.

Finally, given that this research was conducted in a Bonpo settlement which has played a leadership role in terms of Bon identity among the Bonpo communities across the Himalayan areas (Cech 1987; Schrempf 1997), I also hope to reveal how the narratives of Bon are produced and reproduced by its central authorities. In this way, it is hoped that this research can make a contribution to subsequent studies which may want to examine the engagement of a Bon identity at the transnational level, and explore how the centre and margin are constructed within Bonpo communities across state borders.

Fieldwork and Methodology

Setting

The twelve-months of ethnographic fieldwork for this research was carried out over 2007-2008 in Dolanji, where approximately two thirds of the Bonpo in India are based. The Dolanji settlement as a whole is made up of the monastic community (including Menri monastery and Redna Menling nunnery) and the laity. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima, the Abbot of Menri monastery, is the head of the settlement. At the time of my fieldwork, there were 87 households (approximately 400 settlers) registered with the settlement office. However, for most of the time, only half of the settlers, many of them either over 60 or under 17, lived in the settlement. Detailed information on Dolanji will be introduced in Chapter I, which explores settlement location, spatial layout, population, settlement administration, and the daily routines of settlers.

Access, Arrival, and My Life in the Field

Contact before Fieldwork

When I was writing my research proposal and collecting information about Dolanji, I established contact with some of its members, and learned that an official permit issued by the Government of India is required in order to enter the settlement. In addition, I was put in contact with the Taiwan-Tibet Exchange Foundation, which was planning a medical aid project in Dolanji in October 2006. Jane Liu, the project manager kindly sent me their proposal, and invited me to join them. However, I was still in Edinburgh at that time. When I returned to Taiwan, I met Jane, who explained the situation in Dolanji during their visit in October, and put me in contact with her assistant, who had grown up in Dolanji and had spent most of his time there before he left for further study in Taiwan.

The Protected Area Permit (PAP)

In terms of the current rule of the Government of India, all the Tibetan settlements are protected areas. Foreigners are therefore not allowed to visit the settlements without an official permit, the Protected Area Permit (PAP). Visitors have to apply for this permit before they travel, and the whole process takes three to four months minimum. However, in practice this rule varies from state to state, and from district

to district. In some Tibetan settlements, for example, those in Dharamsala and Dehra Dun, visitors would not be asked to show their permits. However, in some, especially those in South India, visitors without a PAP are not allowed to enter or stay in the settlements (Magnusson, Nagarajarao and Childs 2008). Dolanji, however, lies somewhere between these two positions.[12]

The district office of Sirmaur, where Dolanji is located, allows foreigners with purposes related to religion (for example, to study Bon or to visit the monastery or nunnery) to stay in Dolanji without the PAP. In this respect, visitors are limited to the area belonging to the monastic community, and they are not expected to stay long. They are prohibited from entering the village, visiting the lay settlers, and staying overnight in the village. In addition, all foreign visitors have to stay in the Menri guesthouse, which belongs to the Menri monastery, and is located between the monastic complex and the village.

Given the fact that my stay in Dolanji was going to be long and my plan for fieldwork included frequent visits to lay settlers in the village, I was advised to apply for a PAP. However, the process of my application was delayed, and in the first three months, I was asked to stay away from the village. This special condition significantly affected the ways in which the research was carried out, and, to a certain extent, defined the themes of this thesis. I spent the first two months largely in the monastic complex, and only walked through the village when I visited the nunnery and the Bon Children's Home. Luckily, soon after my arrival, the Tibetan New Year (Losar) started, followed by many annual events, in particular, the religious ceremonies. These events were held in the monastery and the whole settlement participated. Scheduled in the first month of the Tibetan calendar which follows the lunar system, these events provided me with an opportunity to meet all the settlers, talk to them, and to participate in and observe the beginning of the annual cycle of life in Dolanji. It was from these ceremonies, in which what are considered to be 'the Bon traditions' were displayed and negotiated, that I started to understand how a

[12] It is important to note that in the 1980s, at the time when Cech carried out her fieldwork, the PAP regulations were not applied to foreign visitors to Dolanji. One of the reasons may be that there were few visitors at that time. As some of the settlers remembered, in the early 1980s, a large part of the settlement was still covered by jungle, and the living conditions were poor. There was no guesthouse for visitors to stay in, and the settlement was unknown to most foreigners. It was not until recently when Dolanji became 'popular' and attracted more visitors that the Indian police started to tighten the rules for foreign visitors.

distinctive Bon identity was conceptualised, and how it interacted within the broader context of the Tibetan diaspora, to create and express meaning in everyday life in Dolanji.

It was not until May that I was informed that my PAP had been approved. However, even with the PAP, which allowed me to visit the settlers in their houses and conduct interviews with them, I was still prohibited from staying overnight in the village, and the leadership was still worried that the Indian police would not be happy if I visited settlers' houses too often. Given that I could not spend long in settlers' houses as I had anticipated before beginning my fieldwork, my understanding of the lives of the settlers began and developed from the various events and gatherings in which I participated. Most of these events form the first half of this thesis. I understood that, for the settlement population, the first priority was to maintain harmonious relations with Indian authorities, to ensure the development of the settlement and, in particular, that Bon religious institutions could exist in a stable and friendly environment. I was also aware that being a foreign outsider, I should be more careful on how I behave, and be mindful of not bringing disservice to the community.

Language Issues: Informal Interviews, Conversations, and Translation

The fieldwork for this research was conducted mostly in English, sometimes in Tibetan, and occasionally in Mandarin. All of the Bonpo in Dolanji speak Tibetan as their first language. However, the settlers who were born and grew up in exile also speak Hindi as their first language, and learn English in school. The first generation, who fled Tibet for India in the 1950s-1960s, adopted Hindi as their daily language, but few of them speak and understand English. Some monastics, who had recently come from Tibet, spoke Mandarin in addition to Tibetan.

I had studied Tibetan for one year prior to my fieldwork. This preparation had enabled me to read and write Tibetan at a basic level, and to engage in conversations. However, it was not until I arrived in Dolanji that I realised that many of the sentences and vocabulary that I had learned from textbooks were not used by my informants in daily conversation. Instead, people in Dolanji usually used a combination of Tibetan with Hindi, English, and regional dialects. During my stay in Dolanji, I continued to study writing, reading and spoken language with three monks from the monastery. One of them, Yung Drung, was also the religious teacher of the

Central School for Tibetans in Dolanji (CST Dolanji). Yung Drung helped me to read from school textbooks, translating each lesson and explaining to me the ways in which he taught the students in the classroom.

In addition, I tried to speak Tibetan for most of my time in Dolanji. Soon after I received the PAP, I visited the village almost every day. I spent time outside settlers' houses where the elders casually gathered, chatting and playing a game called *sho*. As winter approached, I learnt from some of the families how to build a fire with wood, and participated in their preparations for Tibetan New Year. I was also taught how to make Tibetan bread, dumplings, and special snacks for Tibetan New Year. Although I had to return to the guesthouse every evening, I spent most of my day in the village. In addition to conversations during public events, and interviews with the settlers in their houses, a number of my informal interviews and conversations were carried out on the road side, when I ran into the settlers, and in tea shops, where settlers would gather in their spare time.

Some of my interviews for this research were conducted with first generation exiles. Given that most of them did not understand English and my Tibetan was not good enough to understand whole conversations, these interviews were carried out with a translator, Yangchen. Yangchen was in her late twenties and had been born in Dolanji. At the time of my fieldwork, she was teaching Tibetan in a Central School for Tibetans near Dharamsala. We met and became friends when she returned to Dolanji for the summer and winter holidays. She kindly offered to be my translator, helping me with my conversations with the elders. For two to three weeks, we visited the elders in the village together. She helped me to explain to the settlers the purpose of my interviews, and interpreted our conversations. She usually repeated the interviewee's answers in English to me and my questions to them in Tibetan, ensuring both of us understood the answers and questions. It was thanks to her great help that elements of this research could be completed. The informal conversations with Yangchen, and the time I spent with her family, also helped me to gain an insight into the lives of the settlers, and share the happy and challenging events they had lived through.

I understand the limits of conducting fieldwork in second and third languages, and in particular, of relying on translation. I am also aware that while both my informants

and I often employed a second language (for example, English) in our conversations, misunderstandings and misrepresentations may have occurred. However, it was also because of these limits on language that my informants and I spent a longer period of time repeating and explaining questions and answers to one another, to ensure that all concerned understood properly. I believe that it was within this process, in which our conversations and translations were constantly checked back and forth, that communication and interpretation deepened and became more comprehensive. Conducting fieldwork whilst learning Tibetan at the same time was therefore not an obstacle to this research. Instead, it led me to question and learn in detail what people do and don't do, what they say and don't say.

Interactions in the Field

In my view, the social relationships which the researcher builds during fieldwork, and the way his/her informants interact with him/her, crucially affect how an ethnography is represented. Given this, I think it is important to reflect on how I was positioned by my informants, and how these considerations may have changed during fieldwork. Dolanji is a small settlement where visitors, in particular foreign visitors, were easily identified by the settlers. Although my outward physical appearance was Asian and meant that some elder settlers initially mistook me for a Tibetan, my stay in the guesthouse and the restrictions placed on me in terms of mobility and language positioned me as a foreign outsider. For some, this set the boundary between myself and the settlers. However, unlike the other visitors in the guesthouse, the PAP allowed me to visit the village and spend time with the settlers during the course of their daily activities. The longer I stayed in Dolanji and the more time I spent with the settlers, the more the boundary between myself as the researcher and the people of Dolanji as the 'researched' blurred.

For some, I became a friend, or a daughter-like or grand daughter-like person, with whom they felt comfortable and trusted enough to share opinions, joke with, or ask for help with daily chores. The topics of our conversations and the thoughts they shared with me gradually changed over time. One of the reasons may be that my Tibetan had improved. However, I also noted that, over time, and with the same informants, the answers I received for questions which I had posed before, would change. Most of the answers I received in the first three months were quite formal

and distanced from personal experiences. However, when my fieldwork entered the second half of the year, I started to feel that people treated me, or accepted me, as being ‘a person like them,’ instead of a researcher or a ‘foreign stranger,’ with whom they carefully avoided sharing their feelings and personal opinions.

For many settlers, I was a young female away from home and family. Some elders told me that they were surprised that my parents had let me come to Dolanji alone, to stay for so long. They often asked if I phoned home regularly and if my parents would visit me. A few monks often teased me that I should calculate the meters I walked up and down to the village everyday and hand these calculations to my supervisors as part of my thesis. In addition, they joked that I was like the Indians who carried a bag all the time and visited each family to deliver the electricity bill. Some settlers told me that, because I had spent such a long time in Dolanji, I was now a ‘Dolanji person’ and that I should remember to return regularly. Whilst I was becoming a more accepted and familiar part of the village and felt more at ease and more comfortable communicating in Tibetan, at the same time I was also aware that I was always ‘observed.’ Given that many houses were built side by side and the settlers usually spent time chatting and resting outside their houses, interactions between the settlers, and especially between the settlers and me, were open to the public and often watched. Although I tried to visit each household regularly, I did spend more time with certain families and became closer to them. These relationships were noted by the people of the settlement.

I gradually found out that I was sometimes the topic of conversations between settlers. They talked about which families I had visited most often, who were my teachers in the monastery, and what I was learning in Dolanji. Sometimes, when the monks or settlers mentioned the families I usually visited, they joked that they were my grand parents or sisters in Dolanji. This feeling of being ‘watched’ reflects a feature of settlement life. However, it was also a reminder to be cautious with regard to how I behaved and what I said. Moreover, I was always worried that even with the PAP, if I did not keep my distance from those foreign visitors who were not authorised to visit the village, the leadership may one day stop me from visiting the settlers. I was conscious of this tension particularly at the start, but these concerns faded with time. However, it framed my experience to a significant degree

throughout the fieldwork. It was not until I left Dolanji that I understood why part of me suddenly felt relieved.[13]

Further Ethical Considerations

Given the fact that this research is concerned with a minority and with refugee populations, great care has been taken in order to avoid causing any harm to the communities and, in particular, to their relationships with the dominant power and the host society. All the participants' names which appear in this thesis have been replaced by pseudonyms in order to protect their privacy. However, given that the community is rather small, informants can still be easily identified according to the background provided in the thesis. In order not to do any disservice to my informants, who may have made sensitive remarks relating to their flight into exile or, more importantly, regarding the conflict between Bonpo and Buddhists, and between Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, I have taken steps to change personal histories and backgrounds, mixing details as required. I am aware that this may become an issue. However, I have sought to limit the effect these changes may have to an absolute minimum, taking pains to ensure that changes to age, educational background, generation and gender do not substantively affect the central issues as they are presented in this thesis.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. **Chapter I** introduces the living environment of Dolanji, and identifies the key issues which frame the settlers' daily routines and social interactions, both in the settlement and in the broader context of the Tibetan diaspora. These issues, which run through the subsequent chapters, include the diversity of regional identities, the shared religious identity of Bon, and the Tibetan national identity, which has only recently emerged in response to the context of exile.

[13] I returned to Dolanji in December 2008 for almost two months, during which time I visited friends from the village and my teachers in the monastery, and double checked some of my translation of school textbooks (see Chapter V). I was excited, but very nervous before returning, worried about what people would say to me, and my reactions to them. It was not until I arrived in the settlement that the 'return' became real to me. I was surprised to find that everything seemed to remain the same: the people, the place, the smells carried in the air, and even my daily routine. People were asking if I had finished my studies, how long I was going to stay, whether I would stay for Tibetan New Year, and when I thought I would come back again. It seems the tensions which I had initially felt, lightened considerably.

I argue that the ways in which these identities affect the lives of the Bonpo in Dolanji, have changed over the decades.

Chapter II is an attempt to understand how the Bon religious identity came to take priority over regional identities in constructing the Bonpo community in Dolanji. I argue that the claims of identity are usually manifested through the process of (re)making traditions, and the reinvention of traditions often aims to negotiate and articulate the legitimacy of identity. This chapter examines the ways that Bonpo monastics address the concept of tradition, and how they utilise resources from literature and the evidence of 'living traditions' to argue that Bon has a distinctive and equally important position to Buddhism in the Tibetan national discourse. In this way, I explore the process of selection, reconstruction, and standardisation involved in building up the discourse of Bon identity in exile over the decades.

Chapter III focuses on the recurrent commemorations and celebrations in Dolanji in order to understand the connection between Tibetan national events and the official discourse of Tibetan nationalism, and how the Bonpo articulate their regional, religious and national identities in these ceremonies. Taking up annual ceremonies as a display of narratives and as ritual performance, this chapter explores how national commemorations and celebrations in Dolanji reflect, and also try to resolve, the tension between regional identities and a Tibetan national identity, and the contradictions embedded in the relationship between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. I argue that annual ceremonies not only represent what the community should remember and what has changed in its social needs; more importantly, they also seek to negotiate and modify the relationships between individuals and communities, and between the marginalised and the dominant.

Chapter IV seeks to further examine the way the Bonpo manipulate various resources to construct their knowledge of a Bon identity and to negotiate the positioning of 'the Bon traditions' in terms of Tibetan national identity. This chapter is framed by the visit of the Dalai Lama to Dolanji in April 2007, and thus explores the face-to-face interactions between Bonpo and the Dalai Lama, in his capacity as a representative of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Buddhist leadership. This chapter argues that the negotiation of the marginalised for recognition of their identity is never a one-way process of self-defined inclusion and exclusion. Rather, it

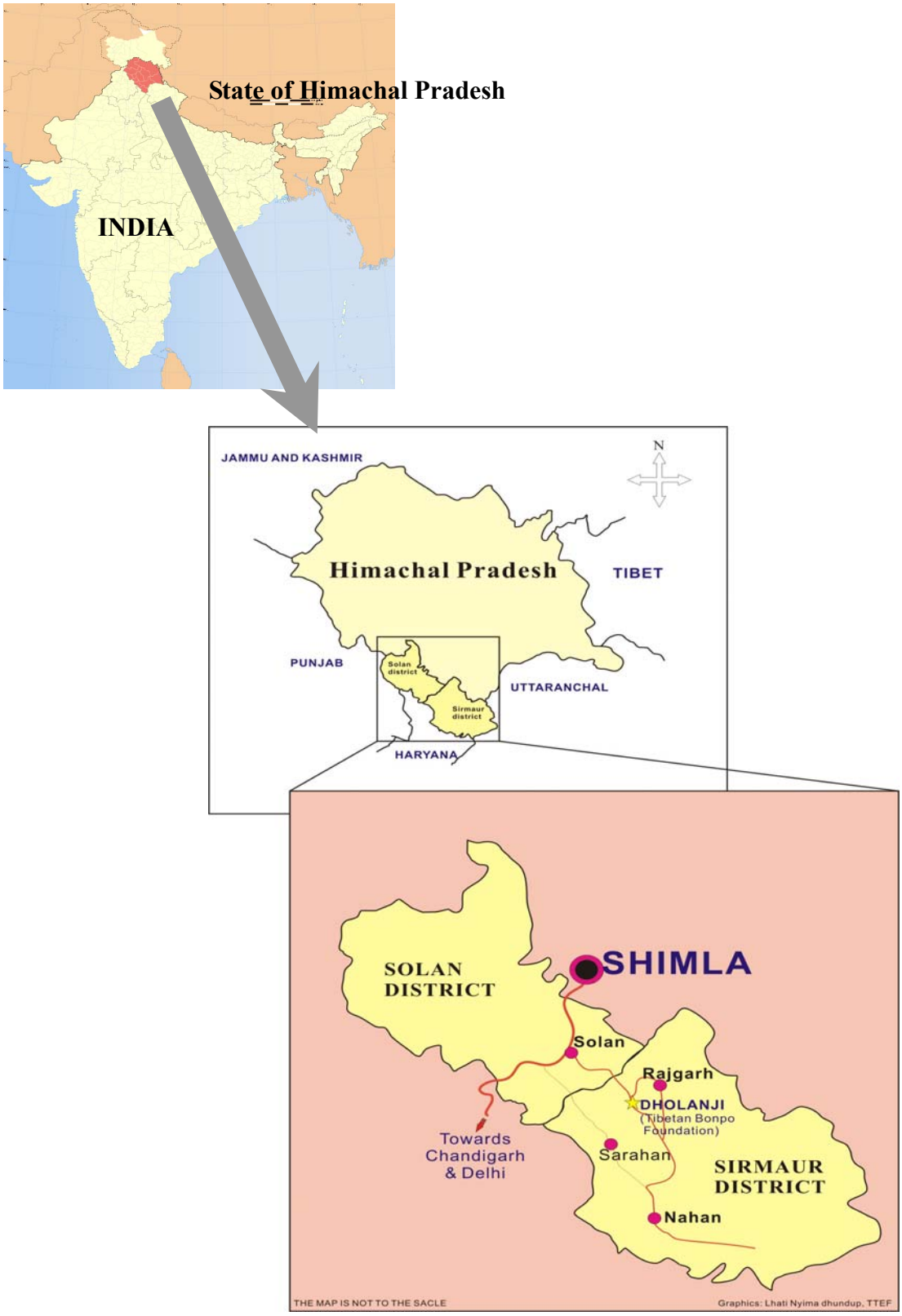
should be understood as a constant dialogue, in which the narratives of inclusion and exclusion from both the national power and the marginalised are continuously contested, negotiated, and redefined in response to one another.

In Chapters I-IV, it is argued that generational differences have been an important issue, which have affected the ways in which Bon identity is conceptualised, and the ways in which Tibetan national identity is addressed. Therefore, Chapters V-VI consider the maintenance of religious and national identities in the next generation from both the perspectives of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Bonpo leadership. Focusing on the education of Tibetan refugees in India, **Chapter V** argues that schooling and power are interrelated, and textbook curricula represent a way in which national power dominates the selection and representation of public knowledge. By examining the textbooks for social studies and history published by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, this chapter looks at how the Tibetan Government-in-Exile engages with various external and internal 'others' in the process of constructing knowledge of the Tibetan nation, and at how it represents Tibetan life to younger generations. In addition, by exploring the means used by the Bonpo leadership to negotiate their claims for Bon identity within the limitations of the school curriculum, I suggest that schooling provides an opportunity for the marginalised to re-examine, re-conceptualise, and sometimes, re-negotiate their position within the dominant discourse.

Chapter VI considers how the Bonpo leadership has made use of opportunities outside of schooling to instil a sense of Bon identity in their second and third generations. This chapter focuses on an annual workshop which has recently been organised by the Menri monastery in Dolanji for Bonpo students. I examine and explore the reasons behind the formation of the workshop; lectures held at the workshop over 2007; the changes in focus apparent in the workshop over the past years; and also, the reactions from Bonpo laity, and the interactions between the audiences and the speakers. This chapter argues that over the past two decades, the Bonpo leadership have considered the next generation as an important focus for the maintenance of Bon identity in exile. Since education has been important in transmitting the collective memory and reinforcing a sense of community, it has become a crucial field in which the Bonpo leadership and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile struggle for the legitimacy of their respective visions of religious and national identity.

The thesis concludes by arguing that the margins not only reveal the control of the central powers, but provide a consistent force for social and cultural change. Although today's Bonpos remain situated on the margins of the Tibetan refugee population, the thesis has demonstrated that, in the past five decades, the Bonpo have not simply adapted to their marginal situation within the Tibetan community in exile. Rather, they have utilised the differentiated status ascribed by multiple 'others' to develop their knowledge of a Bon identity, and further, to illustrate their distinctive, but equally important, status to Buddhism in the official Tibetan national discourse. These multiple 'others,' as this thesis explores, include the internal 'others' of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Buddhist majority, and the external 'others' of host societies, foreign scholars and patrons, and the Chinese Government.

Figure 2. Location of Dolanji (the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation)[14]

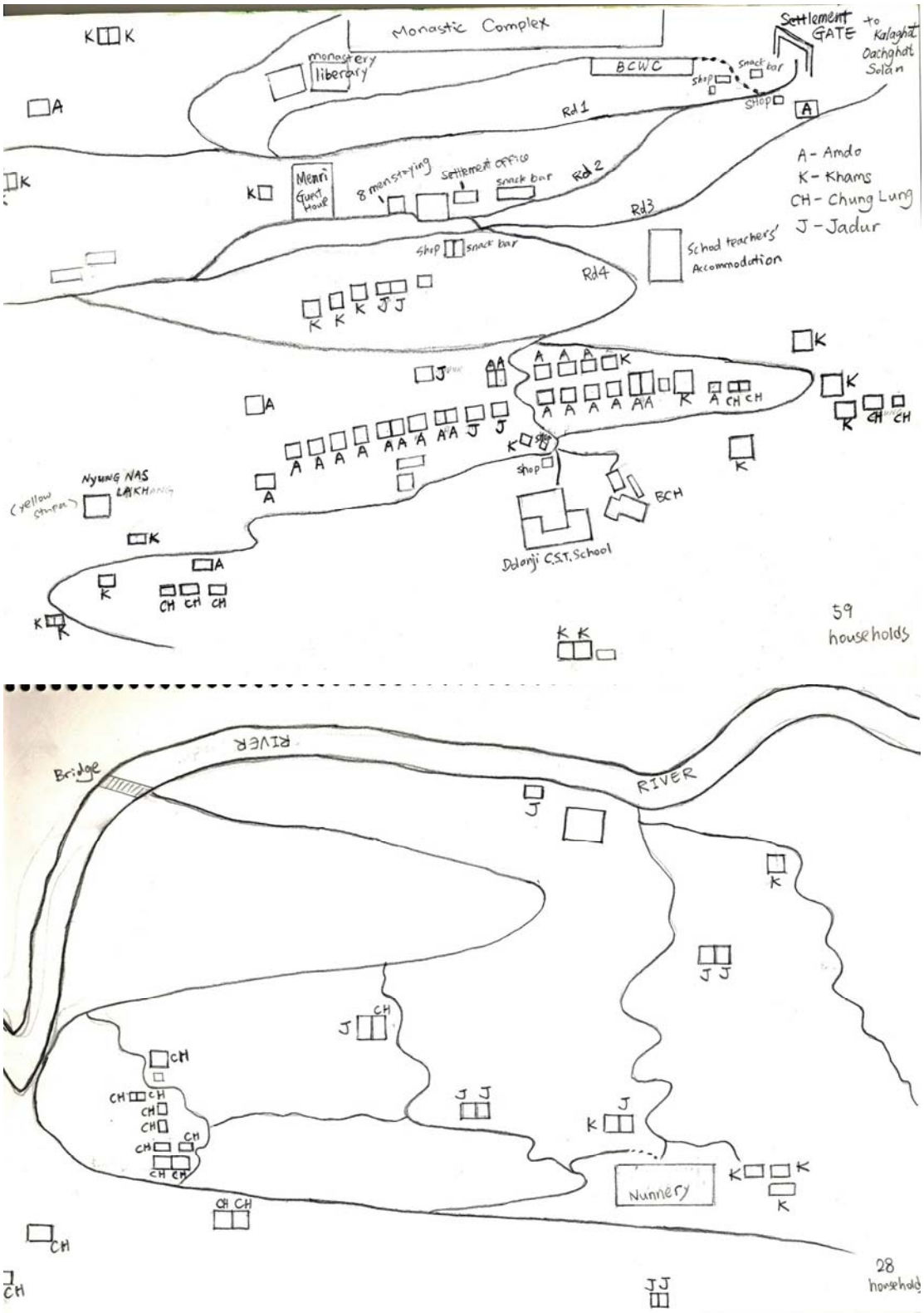


[14] Adapted from Nyima Dhundup's project proposal (2006) on the "Taiwan Tibet Exchange Foundation."

Figure 3. The Bonpo Settlement as depicted by Satellite Map[15]

[15] Source: Google maps (http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=trashigang&aq=&sll=30.844551,77.149215&sspn=0.003652,0.00758&ie=UTF8&ll=30.845744,77.149783&spn=0.001826,0.00379&t=h&z=19)

Figure 4. The Bonpo Settlement in Dolanji[16]



[16] These maps of the settlement layout were drawn by me in 2007-2008, with help from the settlement representative and some monastics from Menri monastery. They kindly corrected and double checked the path layout and the household information detailed on the maps.

Figure 5. Settlement Layout in the Vicinity of the Monastery

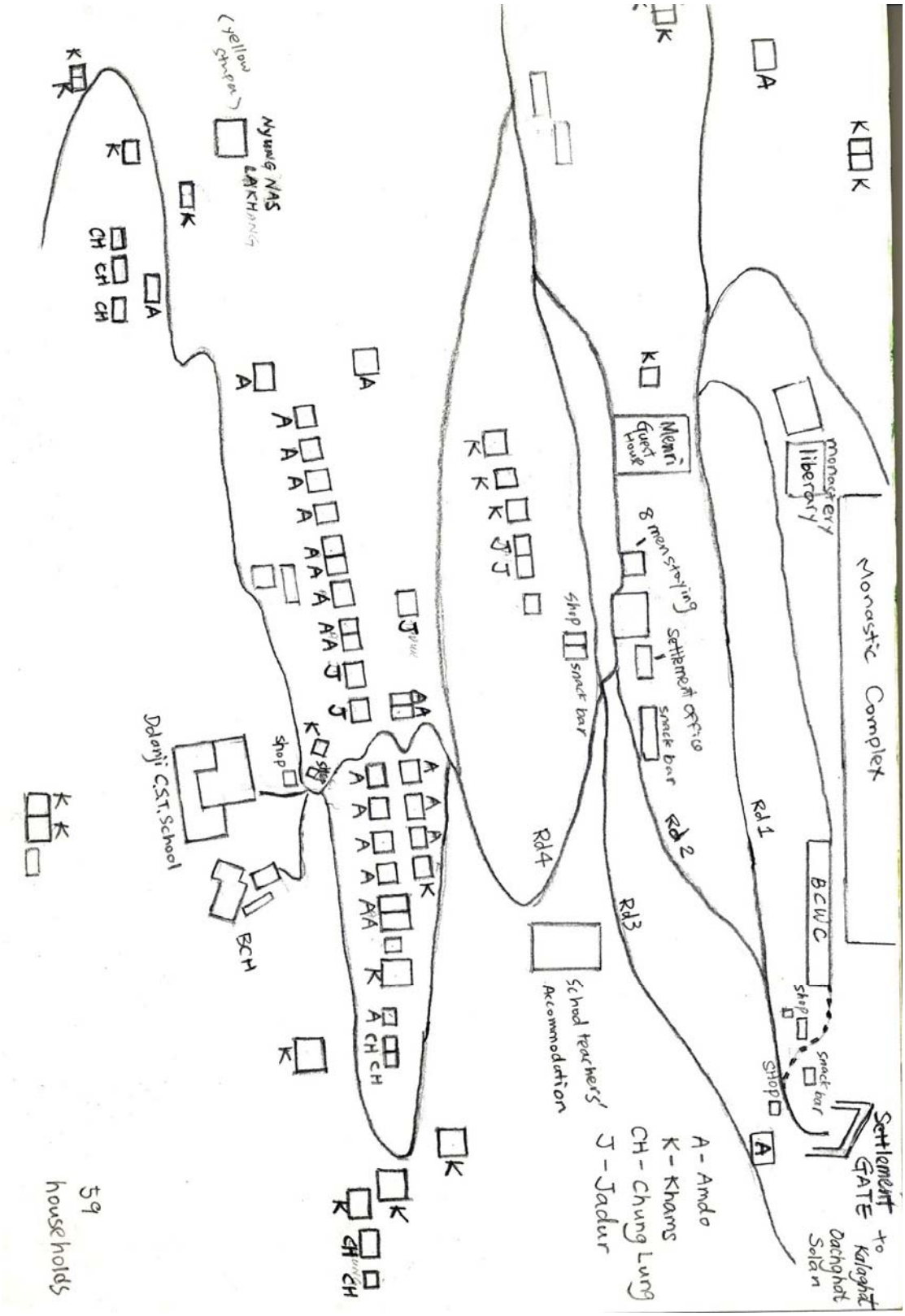


Figure 6. Settlement Layout in the Vicinity of the Nunnery

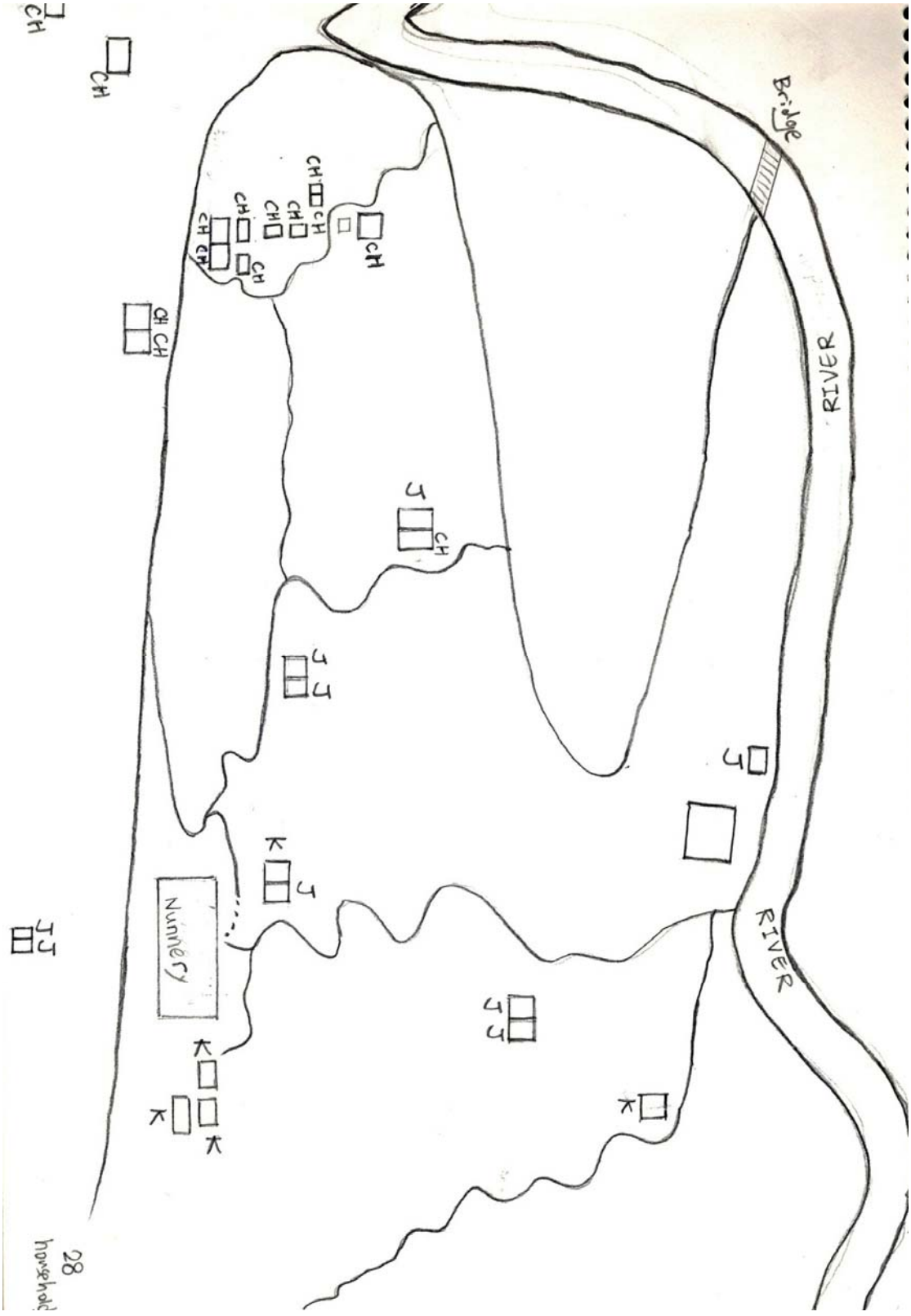


Plate 1. Statue of Tonpa Shenrab in Menri Monastery in Dolanji

Plate 2. The Menri Monastery and Guesthouse (the blue building)

Plate 3. the school (Left) and Nunnery (Right)

Plate 4. An old woman washing grain to make *chang* (Tibetan beer)

Plate 5. Settlers playing the gambling game *sho* outside their house

Chapter I. The Bonpo Settlement

This chapter aims to introduce the living environment of the Bonpo in Dolanji. It will explore the settlement location, layout, administration and population. By exploring the structure of the settlement, I also seek to identify the key issues which have been significant in the settlers' daily lives, providing meaning for their daily routines and social relationships. These issues, which will run through the subsequent chapters, include the diversity of regional identities, generational difference, the context of exile, and the interactions between settlers in Dolanji and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, neighbouring Indians, and the Indian district and state authorities. A detailed introduction to Menri monastery, the Bon monastery located in Dolanji, will be left to the next chapter, which examines the role this monastery has played in the expression of Bon identity in Tibet prior to 1959 and, after 1959, in exile.

Settlement Location

Dolanji is located in the hills at a height of 4,000 feet in the Sirmaur District, Himachal Pradesh, in India. The transport main town, Solan (Figure 2), is situated about 15 km from Dolanji. This location provides the community of the settlement with a semi self-sufficient environment, which maintains a distance from the Indian towns and their busy traffic, but still enables relatively easy access to other cities and to the markets where people can obtain their basic material necessities.

At an altitude of 4,812 feet, Solan is the transport hub for Himachal Pradesh. Buses travelling from Delhi and Chandigarh to Shimla go through Solan. There is also a train station in Solan, with trains to Shimla in the north and Kalka in the south. People from Dolanji usually go to Solan to take buses for Chandigarh, Delhi, and Shimla, where they can change buses or take the train onwards to Dheradun, Dharamsala or other cities when they have to go for business, schools, or to visit friends and relatives. The population of Solan is around 40,000-50,000. The significance of Solan to the Bonpo in Dolanji lies not only in its location as the transport hub, but also in its role in providing people with all kinds of seasonal vegetables and fruits, fresh meat, clothes, newspapers, medicines, facilities for the

house, entertainment (for example, the music shops and the cinema), and internet access in the internet cafes. Many families from Dolanji go to Solan at least once or twice a week to collect their daily necessities. There is a small shopping mall in Solan, inside which there is an area known as the 'Tibetan market', containing around 5-8 small shops and a Tibetan restaurant. Selling mostly winter clothes, some of the shops are run by families from Dolanji, others by families from the Tibetan settlements in Shimla. In addition, there is a small hospital where people receive basic medical care. However, patients who need surgical operations or advanced treatment must travel to the larger hospitals in Chandigarh and Shimla.

Between Dolanji and Solan, there is only one daily bus. Much of the road connecting Dolanji to Solan is covered in mud. The road curves sharply around the hills and is quite narrow in places. In the monsoon season (usually during July, August and September) when the heavy rain washes rocks and mud from the hillsides down to the road, sections of the road can be blocked for several days or even weeks. At such times, transportation between Dolanji and Solan comes to a halt – in effect cutting Dolanji off from Solan and other destinations. Those who wish to travel to Solan during the monsoon often have to go by motorcycle, or make an hour long journey by foot, in order to cross the landslides to the nearby Indian village, from where they can take the bus to Solan. These travel difficulties during the monsoon season clearly illustrate the secluded location of the Bonpo settlement of Dolanji.

Layout of the Settlement

The main road reaching Dolanji divides into two after it enters the settlement gate. One (Rd 1 on Figure 4 and 5), which is wider and flatter, carries vehicles to the monastic complex which is located at the highest point. The other one (Rd 2) descends and leads to the settlement office and the lay community in the valley. Significantly, the layout of the settlement is designed in such a way as to reflect the boundaries which exist between the monastic and lay communities. In most Tibetan villages, the monastery is built on the highest place and intended to distance itself from the local lay population (Karmay 1998; Mills 2003). This can also be observed in many Tibetan refugee settlements in India, in particular, the settlements which were built along the hills, for example, in Dharamsala and Shimla.

The Bonpo settlement in Dolanji occupies a 'V' shape along the hills, descending from two sides into a valley through which a river flows. The river divides the settlement in two. On one side (Figure 5) are located the main settlement entrance, the monastic complex, the Menri guesthouse, the settlement office, the school teachers' dormitory, the school (the Central School for Tibetans in Dolanji[17]), the Bon Children's Home (BCH)[18], and two thirds of the lay settlers (59 households). On the other side (Figure 6) lies the nunnery, which is under the administrative control of Menri monastery, and 28 households. The side where the main monastic complex is established is known locally by Indians as Dolanji, while the other side is called Chondoli. However, because the main part of the settlement is located on the Dolanji side, the whole settlement is simply referred to as 'the Dolanji settlement' by both the Bonpo and the nearby Indian residents. In the discussion which follows, in order to avoid confusion, I refer to the area known locally as Dolanji as the 'monastery side', and the area known as Chondoli as the 'nunnery side'. When referring to the whole settlement, I use the term Dolanji or the Dolanji settlement.

Before we turn to the layout of the local lay community, I think it is important to briefly review the role played by the Menri guesthouse, where I stayed during my fieldwork. As mentioned in the Introduction, the Menri guesthouse is significant not only because it was my place of residence within the settlement, from which I negotiated access into the everyday life of the settlement, but also because it embodies and, to a certain extent, represents the ambiguous relationships between the Tibetan refugees, the Indian authorities, and foreign visitors.

The Menri Guesthouse

With its characteristic blue façade, the Menri guesthouse (see Plate 2) is the residence provided by Menri monastery for foreign visitors. Most of the foreigners

[17] The Central School for Tibetans in Dolanji is also known as 'the CST Dolanji.' It is a secondary school, run by the Central Tibetan Schools Administration (CTSA), under the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India, in cooperation with the Department of Education (DOE) of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

[18] The Bon Children's Home (BCH) was founded in 1988 by Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche, a monk who received his Geshe degree from the Menri monastery in Dolanji. The aim of this organisation is to care for Bonpo children who have lost their parents. It provides Bonpo children recently arrived from Tibet and Nepal with a family environment and sponsors them so they can receive a school education. In 2007-2008, there were 277 children in the BCH, aged from 2 to 18 years old, around 170 of whom were girls. Most of these children were students of the CST Dolanji. Outside school time, they usually participated in religious ceremonies in the monastery along with settlers from the village.

who visited Dolanji were from the United States, Canada and Europe, and were either practitioners of the Bon religion or sponsors of the monastery and the Bonpo children. As I described in the Introduction, foreign visitors are not allowed to stay overnight in the settlers' houses. The Menri guesthouse was therefore built to receive these foreign guests. It is located between the monastic complex and the lay community, which not only allows visitors easy access to the monastery, but also manifests a clear separation of visitors from the local lay community. Two monks, known as guest masters and appointed by the Abbot, are in charge of the guesthouse. Their main tasks include writing down the details of each guest (name, nationality, duration of stay and purpose of visit), checking the facilities of the rooms and building, and collecting rent from visitors. District officials from Sirmaur sometimes visited the guesthouse to check on the visitors, and ascertain their backgrounds and reasons for staying.

It is important to note that the role played by the guesthouse reveals not only the contradictions but also the negotiations embedded in the Bonpo's relationships with the Indian district and state authorities, and with foreign visitors. On the one hand, the Bonpo monastic community relies on foreign sponsors and scholars to help disseminate knowledge of and develop research into the Bon religion (Bjerken 2001; Schrempf 1997). Therefore, for the Bonpo leadership, it is important to ensure that foreign supporters have opportunities to visit the monastery and to participate in the activities of the monastery. However, on the other hand, because of their refugee status, the Bonpo have to comply with and carefully negotiate the regulations set up by the Indian authorities at the district and state levels, as they are their patrons for life in India (Lau 2009; Magnusson, Nagarajarao and Childs 2008; Penny-Dimri 1994). Moreover, as will be discussed in the final section, foreign visitors are important not only for the Bonpo monastic community, but also for the neighbouring Indians, given that they have become the main source of custom for Indian taxi drivers and nearby shops. Therefore, the Bonpo leadership has negotiated with the Indian authorities to allow foreigners to visit Menri monastery and stay at the guesthouse. In return, the monastery has to ensure that their visitors do not break district and state regulations by entering the settlers' houses.

Layout of Households

87 Bonpo households are registered at the settlement office, as residing in Dolanji.

As shown on the maps of the layout (Figures 4 to 6), almost two thirds of the lay settlers are situated on the monastery side. This can be understood partly in terms of the convenience of the location. As we can see, the settlers on the monastery side have easy access to the bus stop, while those living on the nunnery side need to go down to the river first, cross the bridge, and then climb up to the settlement gate. In addition, the condition of the river varies considerably. In summer, especially during the monsoon season, the water levels of the river can often rise suddenly, which means that settlers on the nunnery side may have to wait until the bridge is safe to cross, taking sometimes 3-4 days. Indeed, convenience of location is cited as the reason for why more than half of the settlers chose to build their houses on the monastery side. However, Rinchen, the settlement representative, identified other factors which affected settlers' decisions on where to build their houses when the settlement was originally established.

According to Rinchen, the land on the nunnery side is better for farming, compared to the monastery side. Therefore, when the settlement was founded, those who preferred to engage in business rather than farming chose to live on the monastery side. According to him,

> "*Most of the people from Amdo and some from Kham preferred to do business rather than farming. So they built houses on the monastery side, where there is less space and the land is not very good for farming*."

Settlers who wanted to make a living through farming (many of whom are from Chung Lung, the Western part of U-Tsang), chose to build their houses on the nunnery side, where each household was given a portion of land to farm. From the household layout illustrated on the maps, it can be seen that the houses on the monastery side are clustered tightly, especially along two lines which are called the 'Amdo-lines', where the houses are almost side by side. Yonten, a layman from Kham who was around 60 years old, recalled that:

> "*When we moved to Dolanji [in 1967], many people believed that we would not stay here very long. They thought that very soon we would go back to Tibet. So they didn't want to have a lot of land. They just wanted to do business to survive. They didn't consider making their permanent lives in this place. Many Amdo people who settled along the Amdo-lines were richer. When they left Tibet, they brought lots of jewellery, which they could*

use to do business. However, the people from Kham or Chung Lung were poorer. They needed to have more land to make a living through farming. Also, some of them didn't believe that we would go back to Tibet very soon, so they wanted to make a proper life here. For them, land was very important and a more secure way to make a real living."

Rinchen and Yonten's remarks not only point to the diversity of regional identities among the settlers, they also reveal the conflicts inherent in refugee life, that is, the tensions which exist between the experience of displacement and the longing for emplacement (Harrell-Bond and Voutira 1992; Malkki 1992, 1995a, 1995b). By taking up Turner's (1969) concepts of 'liminality' and 'betwixt and between,' Harrell-Bond and Voutira (1992: 7) point out that the status of refugees itself reflects an in-between state, in which people are as a 'floating group,' waiting to be returned to their homeland. This longing for emplacement, as Malkki (1992, 1995a, 1995b) has put it, plays a central part in the narratives of refugees, of those who are unable to simply fit into the order of things in their new 'home'. This in-between status of refugees may impose restrictions on and limitations to the way of life of the Tibetans (including both Bonpos and Buddhists) in India. However, as this thesis shall argue, it also provides opportunities for Tibetans to manipulate resources and to assert what it means to be Tibetan, and to utilise their refugee status as a means to differentiate themselves from multiple 'others.'

Additionally, Rinchen and Yonten's remarks reflect that regional identities played an important role in people's relocation in Dolanji. In their accounts, designations such as 'Amdo people,' 'Kham people,' and 'Chung Lung people' were used to explain both people's characteristics and the layout and location of households. On the maps, we can also see that on the monastery side, people from Amdo built their houses side by side in two lines, while the houses of people from Kham and Chung Lung are scattered randomly on the hill, although some of the Kham-pa still live quite close to each other. On the other side, the houses of the people from Kham and Jadur (in Southwest U-Tsang) lie randomly on the hill, while the 10 or so houses belonging to settlers from Chung Lung are situated together, and known as 'the Chung Lung line'. This sense of regional division, which is reflected in the layout of households, shows clearly that regardless of the shared Bon religious identity, regional identities are of importance to the way the settlers conceptualise and organise their lives in exile

(Cech 1987, 1993; Thargyal 2001). As I will discuss, from the founding of the settlement, the settlers organised themselves into four regional groups (*shog*), along with the administration of the settlement, through which to participate in settlement affairs and build social networks with one another. For these first generation settlers, regional identities and religious identity have been equally important in the reconstruction of life in exile.

Settlement Committee and Settlement Office

Dolanji is now one of the 39 Tibetan settlements in India, under the administration of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. However, it should be noted that, while Dolanji is in many ways no different to other settlements in the way it interacts with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, it is different to other settlements in terms of a number of minor issues relating to the running of the settlement. Although these differences have been played down by the settlement leadership in order to emphasise their loyalty to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, they reflect an historical context particular to the Bonpo and their settlement in the 1960s-1970s.

Unlike the other Tibetan settlements, whose lands are distributed and owned by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the land of Dolanji belongs to a committee run by the settlers. This is the committee of the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation, the official name for the Bonpo settlement in Dolanji. One may wonder why, while most of the Tibetan settlements in India are subordinate to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile through the ownership of their settlement lands, Dolanji seems to be different. In the 1960s, at the time that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile began to redistribute aid from international organisations for the reestablishment of religious institutions in exile, Bonpo religious institutions were excluded. Therefore, while the Buddhist majority received support to build their monasteries throughout the settlements founded by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, no aid was channelled to help the Bonpo with theirs (Cech 1987; Karmay 1998; Skorupski 1981). Moreover, as many Bonpo elders remembered, many settlements even refused to have a Bon monastery built on settlement land.

As a result, the Bonpo monastics were compelled to seek help from the Catholic Relief Service (CRS), an American organisation which sought to help Tibetans

rebuild their lives in exile in the 1960s. In 1967, the CRS helped the Bonpo to purchase land for their settlement and to register the settlement with the Government of India, under the name of the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation. As soon as the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation was registered, the CRS transferred the ownership and the running of the foundation to the Bonpo community. The settlers, in 87 households, became the permanent members of the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation. A committee, led by Sherab Tenpai Gyaltsen (at that time the head lama of the reconstructed Menri monastery in Dolanji) and the director Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (one of the leading monastics involved in the foundation of Dolanji), was given a leadership role in the running of the settlement. It was not until 1977 that the Bonpo settlement in Dolanji was recognised and incorporated into the administrative authority of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and the 87 households were registered as residents of Dolanji under the Department of Home Affairs (of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile). However, although Dolanji is now under the administration of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, it still maintains full ownership of the land and the houses in the settlement, and its committee is still in charge of the use and distribution of land and houses. This difference, although not openly emphasised by the settlement leadership, not only reveals the marginality experienced by the Bonpo under the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in the 1960s, but also reflects an ambiguity intrinsic to the relationship between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Since the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's acknowledgement of the Bonpo settlement in Dolanji, a settlement representative (also called 'the settlement officer'), in charge of settlement affairs and subordinate to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, has been regularly elected by the settlers.[19] It should be noted that the role played by the settlement representation of Dolanji is slightly different to representatives from other Tibetan settlements. When dealing with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the Dolanji representative, akin to other settlement representatives, acts as the head of settlement. However, within Dolanji, the settlement representative is subordinate to the committee of the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation, which, led by the Abbot of Menri monastery, still holds the actual leadership role in the settlement. In the committee, the post of secretary is usually held by the settlement representative, who has the responsibility to report to the committee of settlement affairs. Moreover, on issues concerning land and housing of Dolanji, the settlement representative has to seek

[19] Representatives serve a term of three years, and a maximum of two terms.

permission from committee members before he hands proposals to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

The structure of the settlement administration demonstrates that, while it remains under the leadership of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and follows the directives of the Central Administration in Dharamsala, within the settlement the Bonpo religious leadership maintains an independent authority, through the committee, in terms of the organisation and development of the settlement. Moreover, the role of the settlement representative, who is subordinate to both the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the committee of the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation, also represents the ambiguity and negotiation between two identities, that is, the Tibetan national identity and the Bon religious identity. As will be examined in subsequent chapters, the relationship between these two identities, which are sometimes conflicting with, and sometimes subordinating to one another, has been constantly modified in the development of Dolanji, and has directly affected the way that settlers have lived their lives in exile over the past decades.

At the time of my research (2007-2008), there were 14 members in the committee of the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation (see Table 1), including the president, the director, vice president, the secretary, and 10 other members. Both the president and director are life members. The position of president, which also includes the position of settlement leader, is always held by the Abbot of Menri monastery, and the director is Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. We note from the heads of the committee that the settlement is primarily under the supervision of the monastery leadership. The leadership of the monastery, especially the Abbot, plays a key role in the direction and strategic planning of the settlement. In this regard, it could be argued that religious identity has been fundamental to the establishment and development of the settlement, since its foundation. I will return to this issue in the next chapter, which seeks to understand the role of religious identity in the establishment of Dolanji.

Apart from the president and director, as mentioned, the secretary of the committee is usually the settlement representative, who is elected under the supervision of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and therefore is separate to the election of other committee members. The vice president and the other 10 members are elected from the settlers. The term of service for these 11 members is three years, and an

individual can stand for election as many times as he/she wishes.[20] From Table 1, it is also interesting to note that a large proportion of the committee members elected from the settlers were over the age of 60. Some people explained that this was because "*older people are more reliable and they have more experience than the young*." However, as will be discussed in the next section, the main reason that elected members were drawn from the older members of the community is because they constitute the majority of settlers residing in the settlement.

President (1) (Life Member)	Lungtok Tenpai Nyima, current abbot of Menri monastery
Director (1) (Life Member)	Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, one of the high lamas who founded the settlement
Secretary (1) (elected, 2005-2008)	Rinchen, the Settlement Officer (Male, age 35)
Vice President (1) (elected, 2006-2009)	Jadur Sangpo (Male, age approx. 70)
10 Members (elected, 2006-2009)	(age) 30-39 2 people (Males) 50-59 2 people (Males) 60-69 6 people (Males)

Table 1. Members of the Settlement Committee, 2006-2009[21]

According to its members, the committee does not meet regularly. Meetings are only held when there are urgent matters to be discussed. Often the settlement representative takes care of routine settlement affairs. Every week he has regular meetings with the leaders of the four regional groups, which are organised by settlers themselves. Sometimes he gathers the heads of the 87 households to discuss settlement affairs. When new ideas or suggestions involving the use of land in the settlement are brought up in the meetings, for example, plans to build a new road or bridge, the settlement officer must call for a meeting of the committee of the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation, and bring these plans to committee for discussion. If the plans are agreed by the committee, the settlement officer can hand the proposal to the Tibetan Administration, to request financial sponsorship.

As the membership of the settlement, the 87 households have the responsibility to

[20] During my stay in Dolanji, the 11 members of the committee were elected in August 2006 and their term of service was until August 2009. The settlement representative however, was elected in 2005 and his term was due to end in 2008.

[21] The information for this table was provided by the settlement office of Dolanji in 2007-2008.

participate in settlement meetings called by the settlement representative and settlement committee, and to attend the ceremonies that are held on Tibetan New Year, Lhasa Uprising Day, Dolanji Foundation Day, and the birthday of the Dalai Lama. If household members are not in Dolanji and cannot send a representative to take part in the meetings and celebrations, they are fined by the settlement office and the committee. Apart from these obligations, the members of the 87 households have the right to participate (to vote and stand as candidates) in elections for settlement officer, settlement secretary and the 11 members of the committee of the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation.

Settlement Population

The population of Dolanji can generally be divided into two communities (Table 2): the monastic community, which includes the monks, the nuns, and the boys of the Bon Children Welfare Centre (BCWC)[22]; and the lay community, which consists of the settlers from the 87 households, the children in the BCH, several lay men who do not belong to the 87 households, and the faculty of the CST Dolanji. In 2007-2008, there were 22 teachers (10 Tibetans and 12 Indians) in addition to one Indian Principal, one Indian secretary and one Indian accountant in the CST Dolanji. Most of the Indian faculty rented houses in the nearby Indian villages and Solan, and commuted to the school by motorbike. The Tibetan teachers used to live in the village, renting houses from the Dolanji settlement office.

Compared to the rest of the population in the settlement, the mobility of the school faculty is high. If they receive a new appointment from the CTSA, they must move to the new settlement. In 2007, a new building was completed as the teachers' accommodation, and 10 Tibetan teachers and 2 Indian families moved in. Located between the settlement office and the settlers' houses, this teachers' accommodation, a brand-new pink building with its modern, flat roofed and multi-floored appearance, represents a very different image to the settlers' houses, which are usually painted in white and blue, with leaning roofs and a single storey. The appearance of the teachers' accommodation and its location, at some distance from the settlers' houses, seems to imply that the school teachers are 'not fitting-in' with the settlers.

[22] The Bon Children Welfare Centre (BCWC), located close to Menri monastery, is the accommodation for the Bonpo boys (aged between 3 and 18) whose families are either separated or unable to support their education. The institution, under the administration of Menri monastery, provides the boys with food, accommodation, education fees, and basic religious instruction.

The Monastic Community	The monks in the monastery & the boys in the BCWC (165): 285 The Nuns in the nunnery: 44 **Total: 329**
The Lay Community	The Settlers (87 households): around 400-450 Children in the BCH: 277 Laymen in the small red house: 8 Faculty of the CST Dolanji & their families: Not Counted **Total: 685-735**
Total Population (excepting school teachers): 1014-1064	

Table 2. The Population Division of Dolanji (2007-2008)[23]

The school teachers are regarded as 'the outsiders' of the settlement, both by themselves and by the Bonpo settlers. Yangkyi, whose husband taught Tibetan in the CST Dolanji, mentioned to me several times, '*We are outsiders. We are not Bonpo and we don't know very much about the village*.' In her late twenties, Yangkyi was from a Tibetan settlement in Dehradun. Both she and her husband are Buddhists. What she meant by 'outsiders' contains two meanings: that they don't belong as members of the settlement; and that they are not Bonpo. All of the Tibetan school teachers are Buddhists. As such, the school teachers would not participate in most of the annual ceremonies held by Menri monastery. They only appeared at the celebrations in the settlement when the school faculty and students had to take part, such as the celebrations and commemorations of Tibetan national days. In addition, it is interesting to note that the school teachers and their families were more socially active with one another, than with the settlers. The teachers would usually gather together for meals, or visit each other's flat for tea and conversation after the school day had finished, but would seldom visit the settlers and rarely join the random gatherings of the settlers outside settler houses. Also, the children of the school faculty would usually play together after school. In view of this, I have excluded the school teachers in respect of the following analysis of the settlement population. The discussion will concentrate specifically on the Bonpo population in the settlement, which makes up 97-98% of the population.

[23] The information in Tables 1-4 in this chapter was provided by the Dolanji settlement office, 2007-2008.

Lay Settlers

The population of the Dolanji settlement is approximately 1000. Rinchen, the settlement representative, emphasised that, compared to other Tibetan settlements, the Bonpo settlement in Dolanji is relatively small in the size. From the table we find that around one third of the population belong to the monastic community, nearly one third resides in the BCH, and one third is made up of lay settlers. The number of lay settlers is based on records from the settlement office, in 2007-2008. However, it is important to note that within any one year, many settlers, especially those aged between 18 and 59, attend schools or work outside of the settlement. Table 3 shows that it is people age 18-59 that constitute more than half of the settler population. However, many of them only come back to Dolanji during their school holidays or the Tibetan New Year. Therefore, for most of the year, only around half of the lay settlers, many of whom are either over 60 or under 17, live in the settlement. The demographics of the lay settler community have had an important influence on the everyday life and routine of the settlement. First, as mentioned earlier, many of the members who are elected to the settlement committee are aged over 60. Additionally, at most of the annual ceremonies, except for those during the Tibetan New Year, older settlers and the students attending the CST Dolanji make up the main part of the lay participants.

Age	Number of people
1-9	25
10-19	35
20-29	43
30-39	58
40-49	75
50-59	73
60-69	55
Over 70	40
Total	454

Table 3. The Age Demographic of the Settlers (2007-2008)[24]

Considering the reasons why many people must leave Dolanji to find work, the settlement representative and his secretary, who were aged 35 and 28, explained,

[24] The information on the age composition of settlers was provided by the settlement officer in 2008. According to the settlement officer, these numbers were not counted exactly, because many settlers were with their families outside Dolanji. In his terms, the numbers for the first generation (people who are over 50) were more exact compared to the rest of the community.

> "*It's because it is very difficult to earn money in this village. There is no opportunity to find a job here. Nowadays, people who have a lot of land also don't want to farm for a living. Now we just leave the land to grow wild. People think to do business outside the community will bring in more money, and faster. Also, some people prefer to find office jobs in Dharamsala, if they have a good education, because the pay is higher. They can send the money back to their parents and grandparents in Dolanji*."

As far as I know, not many Bonpos who worked outside the community were doing what Rinchen and his secretary would describe as 'office jobs.' A few of them were working as secretaries in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. However, given that the posts in the Government-in-Exile were limited and competitive, many Bonpos preferred to run their own business, for example, selling winter clothes or Tibetan ornaments in the cities between India and Nepal. A few of them had their own grocery shops, ornament shops, restaurants, and guesthouses in the bigger Tibetan settlements in Delhi, Shimla, Assam, and Manali. Moreover, it is interesting to find that, although many Bonpos are spread across different Tibetan settlements working or studying, they remain in close connection with each other, and mostly via mobiles. When travelling from place to place they will often get in touch with Bonpo in the settlements that they visit, engaging their help in finding a place to stay or availing themselves of their hospitality. This habit of staying with those who shared a close tie in terms of religious belief or in their place of origin, when travelling or trading, was also common in Tibet prior to 1959 (and even today). However, the use of mobile phones to contact each other reflects an important aspect of how the Bonpo (and other Tibetan refugees) in India have adapted their former social network ties to their situation in exile.

The mobile phone has played an important role in the everyday life of many Tibetan refugees in India. It is common to see the monks and the laity (particular the second generation) using their mobile phones to talk with friends and family spread across other settlements and in other countries, and sometimes with their foreign sponsors. In Dolanji, about 80% of the monks and nuns have their own mobile phones, as well as most of the laity who are studying or working in other cities. According to them, most people cannot afford to buy a computer or laptop for the internet. Also, frequent

power cuts make it difficult to use computers and make communication by landline difficult. As a result, the portability of mobile phones, and their relatively cheap cost, allow Tibetan refugees in India to maintain connections with their families and friends when on the move, and with relative ease. This phenomenon is interesting not only because it represents the maintenance of former social practices via the newly developed technology, but also because it reflects an economic hierarchy between the Tibetan refugees and their Indian neighbours, many of whom cannot even afford to buy the cheapest mobile phone.

Most people aged 26-59 who stay in Dolanji are officers or secretaries in the monastery office, monastery library, settlement office, and the BCH office. The number of people who hold such office posts in the settlement amount to about 10, and all of them are male. Some are married and have their families in the settlement, while others are single. Besides the people working in the offices, there are still some settlers aged between 26 and 59 in the settlement. Several of them run family businesses, such as grocery shops and snack bars in the settlement, while others sell winter clothes in shops in Solan and Shimla, and commute almost daily between Dolanji and their shops. These people were also mostly men. It seems that there were more males than females aged between 26 and 59 staying in Dolanji,[25] but why?

Kelsang, who was almost 30 and was the secretary for the monastery office, explained that many girls were married to people from other settlements or had migrated to other countries, and they only came back to Dolanji to visit their parents. Ersang, in her early thirties, however, had a different explanation. Ersang's parents ran a grocery shop in the settlement. I met Ersang during the Tibetan New Year when she returned to Dolanji, and helped to take care of the shop. At that time, Ersang was a postgraduate student in one of the universities in the United States. Before she was awarded a scholarship to study in the United States, Ersang had worked for two years in the Department of Information and International Relations of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Ersang joked with me that girls from Dolanji were usually smarter than boys, and they also studied and worked harder. In her explanation, many females from Dolanji worked as teachers in the Tibetan schools in different

[25] Among settlers over 60 and under 25 who stayed in Dolanji for most of the year, the difference in number between females and males was not significant.

settlements; some found jobs in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, while others had got scholarships to study overseas. Ersang's elder sister was also in the United States, working as a nurse in a hospital. Ersang also joked that only those who could not find jobs outside Dolanji stayed in Dolanji, most of who, coincidently, were males. It is not certain if this is why there were more males than females in Dolanji. However, Ersang's remark confirms that there are few employment opportunities in Dolanji, and most people aged 26-59 prefer to find work in bigger settlements, or even, in other countries.

To conclude, we can say that in Dolanji, except during Tibetan New Year and the school holidays, most of the people who reside in the settlement are the monastic population, the children of the BCWC and the BCH, and lay settlers who are aged between 26-59, working in the settlement offices or running family shops, and are over 60. In this regard, in considering the view points of second generation laity (aged between 10 and 46), this thesis relies heavily on informal conversations and interviews with settlers who hold official posts and are involved in family businesses in the settlement. Most of them, as mentioned, were male. Part of the discussion in this thesis however, is based on conversations with the students and settlers who came back to Dolanji in their school holidays and during Tibetan New Year.

The Tibetan Speaking Bonpo Population from Nepal over the Past 10-20 Years

In Dolanji, there are around 450 people (165 in the BCWC and 277 in the BCH, Table 2) who do not belong to the 87 households in the settlement. They are mostly under the age of 18 and are studying in the CST Dolanji. Most of these young people are from the Bonpo families in Nepal, and only a few escaped from Tibet recently, with their parents or elder relatives. In this thesis, the main focus is on the first and second generations of settlers from the 87 households, rather than the population who recently arrived from Nepal and Tibet. However, the discussions sometimes apply to these recent arrivals because of their being part of the Bonpo community. In Chapters II-IV, which concentrate on collective community events in Dolanji, and Chapters V-VI, which are concerned with schooling and with the Bonpo students' negotiations with Buddhist identity, I refer to the experiences of some of the recent Bonpo arrivals.

In this regard, it is important to have a basic understanding of the background of this particular group of Bonpo.

The increasing influx of young Bonpo from Nepal is in response to the establishment of the BCWC in 1983 and the BCH in 1988. Since these two institutions were established, many Bonpo children in Nepal who were orphaned or from very poor families have been brought to Dolanji to the BCWC and BCH, which provide them with food and accommodation, and sponsor their school education. The Bonpo families from which these children come can be divided roughly into two categories according to their place of origin. In the first category are the families belong to Tibetan refugees who fled from Tibet from 1959 onwards.[26] The second category comprises those Bonpo families who have been living in Nepal for centuries (see Karmay 1972, 1998; Ramble 1990).[27]

When these children finish their education in the CST Dolanji (usually up to the 8th grade, and sometimes, to the 10th), some may go to the schools outside Dolanji for further education. Some may be ordained as monks and join the monastic dialectic school (or be ordained as nuns and stay in the nunnery). Those who do not wish to continue their studies usually go back to their home villages in Nepal. It should be noted that, because most of these people hold Nepali citizenship, they are not allowed to work for the institutions which are subordinate to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in India, for example, CST schools and settlement offices. Many girls therefore, go back to Nepal and get married in their villages, while some boys try to find jobs in Kathmandu. Some of them work for the travel agencies, Tibetan restaurants, and guesthouses in Kathmandu; some are involved in the business of buying and selling goods between the main cities of China, Nepal and India. In brief, we could say that most of the people in the BCWC and the BCH

[26] In 1959, when the Tibetans (including the Buddhists and the Bonpo) fled from Tibet into exile, most of them reached Nepal and Bhutan before India. Among this population, some resettled in Nepal and Bhutan, whereas others continued their journey to India (Cech 1987; Information Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama 1981: 189-206).

[27] The Bonpos living in the villages in Nepal are not the refugees who fled Tibet in the 1950s-1960s. Many of them fled Tibet a long time ago when the Bon religion experienced persecution at the hands of Tibetan Buddhist kings in the 8th century (Karmay 1972, 1998) (see also the Introduction to this thesis). Ramble also suggests that a proportion of the present inhabitants of Mustang District in Nepal are the descendants of Tibetan migrants from the border areas of today's Tibet and Nepal, and many of them appear generally no different from the Tibetan population (cf. 1990: 187).

usually leave Dolanji when they finish the CST Dolanji, except for those joining the monastery and nunnery.[28]

However, a few boys go to Nepal to visit parents or relatives for short periods, and return to Dolanji again. On return they usually stay in a house next to the Menri guesthouse. At the time of conducting fieldwork for this research, there were 8 men staying in the house. Regarding his reasons for returning to Dolanji, Tenpa, in his late twenties told me, "*I want to learn thangka painting* [religious painting in the Tibetan Bon and Buddhist traditions, Kværne 1995] *at the monastery, and then go back to my village to open a school to teach thangka painting.*" However, most of these young men remain undecided about their future. Except for those learning *thangka* painting with the monks and those others attending the open school in Solan, most just hang around the settlement. They sometimes help to run the shops or snack bars when the owners are too busy, and sometimes join their friends from the settlement to sell sweaters in Delhi during the winter. Even though these young men are not originally from the settlement, they have spent most of their lives there. They have close friends from the settlement, and usually spend time with them. However, settlers do not consider them to be part of the settlement. Unlike the settlers of the 87 households, they do not hold membership of the settlement, and as such, are not allowed to participate in the settlement meetings and elections.

Regional Groups and Regional Identities

As noted previously, though Dolanji was established under a shared Bon religious identity, the first generation of settlers were also drawn from a variety of places across three regions: Kham, Amdo, and U-Tsang. In Dolanji, they have been divided into four (Table 4): Khams (*khams*), Amdo (*a mdo*), Chung Lung (*khyung lung*), and Jadur (*bya dur*) (Chung Lung and Jadur belong to U-Tsang). According to the

[28] At the time of my fieldwork, there were 44 nuns in the nunnery. Almost all of them were from Tibetan families in Nepal. Only a few, who were fairly old, were from the first generation of settlers in Dolanji, and became nuns after their husbands had passed away, or after their children had grown up. The nunnery is located in an area which is difficult to reach from the main settlement gate. Therefore, except for the interactions with nearby lay households, the nunnery is, to a certain extent, secluded from the main part of the settlement, and in particular from Menri monastery. Also, the Nunnery complex is relatively small compared to Menri monastery. During my stay in Dolanji, there was an elderly layman, Tseten, residing near the nunnery, who was appointed by the Abbot of Menri monastery as the main teacher for the nuns. Tseten had been a monk in Menri monastery. After he graduated from the dialectic school, he renounced his monastic life and married a settler from the village. Apart from Tseten, the nuns sometimes received teachings from the Abbot and the head teacher of Menri monastery, who would visit the nunnery about once a fortnight.

settlers, the different regions of origin are clearly reflected in people's dialects, accents, dress, and sometimes in their appearance (see also Cech 1987, 1993; Houston & Wright 2003; Lopez 1998; Stoddard 1994; Thargyal 2001). These regional differences significantly influenced the relocation and reconstruction of life for the first generation in Dolanji. As described earlier, the spatial arrangement of the households represents a sense of regional division. People from the same region often built their houses near to one another.

After the settlement was founded, the first settlers divided themselves into these four regional groups (using the household as the counting unit), by which they organised themselves along with the administration of the settlement. In each division, the position of leader rotates among the heads of households. The four leaders of divisions are responsible for passing down important information from the settlement representative to the members, and bringing opinions from members to their weekly meetings with the settlement representative. Apart from the regular meetings on settlement affairs, each of the four regional groups also has their own separate group gatherings, such as picnics and annual festivals, in order to continue and maintain a sense of regional unity.[29]

Name of Region	**Number of Households**
Kham (*khams*)	26 Households
Amdo (*a mdo*)	26 Households
Chung Lung (*khyung lung*)	21 Households
Jadur (*bya dur*)	14 Households
Total	87 Households

Table 4. Households of the Four Regional Groups, 2007-2008

These four divisions have been important in establishing social networks for the first settlers in their lives in exile. It should be noted that, although the Bon identity initially provided a common basis for laity to settle in Dolanji, it has been the regional identities that have really informed everyday life for the laity in Dolanji, and

[29] However, in 2007-2008, only the Amdo and Kham groups had their gatherings for picnics and the annual festival. According to the settlers, in recent years, because the number of residents had declined in Dolanji, the Chung Lung and Jadur groups no longer held group gatherings.

helped them to maintain a sense of continuity in terms of their lived experiences in Tibet. The importance of regional identity among the first generation will be further discussed in Chapter III, when we examine the annual ceremonies in Dolanji. However, it should be noted that these regional identities, which have been significant in the social lives of the first generation, must be carefully examined in terms of social change. The question of whether they continue to be significant to the second and third generations requires further consideration.

Generational Difference

"I came with my wife, two relatives [spun mched], and one relative's husband to India. We first stayed in Assam. From Assam we went to Shimla. We worked on building the road there over 1962-1965. In 1968 we came to Dolanji. Why did we come to Dolanji? Because we are Bonpos. It is very good that all Bonpos live here together. I am very happy with this. Now I feel like Dolanji is my second home [pha yul]."

(Wangyal, 79, first generation settler, 2007).[30]

"I came to India when I was 36 and to Dolanji in 1967. Even now, I don't feel Dolanji is home [pha yul], for me it is more like a guesthouse [mgron po'i bsdad sa]." **(Dhakpa, 80, first generation settler, 2007).**

"Dolanji is like a home for me. My motherland is more like the land of my parents. I don't know what it looks like, so now I don't want to go there. I want to see the land of my parents, but I don't want to stay there. It is very difficult to live there."

(Rinchen, 35, born in Dolanji, second generation, 2007).

"I don't know about my parents' villages. I was born in India. Dolanji is my birth place. So I don't know about Tibet and what they are doing there. I've only seen it in movies. In my view, I think Dolanji is the best place for me in the whole world. I wouldn't like to go anywhere else. I will stay in Dolanji." **(Tashi, 19, born in Dolanji, second generation, 2007).**

[30] The accounts were translated by Yangchen, who is in her late twenties and from a family in Dolanji. Yangchen accompanied me to do interviews with the elders (most of them were over 60) and helped me to translate my questions and the answers from the interviewees.

In this thesis, I divide the settlers in Dolanji into three generations. The first generation refers to those who were born before 1959 in Tibet, such as Wangyal and Dhakpa. The year 1959 is significant in marking the beginning of exile for the Tibetan refugees. Most of the first settlers in Dolanji fled Tibet around 1959. They fled into India in the 1960s, and settled in Dolanji from 1967. When they moved to Dolanji, some were adults, some were little children. Some from the first generation had already passed away prior to 2007-2008. Those remaining in the settlement are now over the age of 50. The second generation consists of the children of the first generation. These people, for example, Rinchen and Tashi, were born after 1960 in exile. A few of them were born in Nepal, some were born in other settlements in India, and others were born in Dolanji. In 2007-2008, their ages ranged from 10 to 46. They all grew up in Dolanji, and some work in the settlement offices. The most important difference between the first and the second generations is the place of birth. While the first generation was born in Tibet, the second generation was born in exile. This difference is significant because it affects the way they experience and express their connection with the motherland (in a general sense, Tibet), and their regional, religious, and national identities.

In their accounts, Wangyal called Dolanji his second home, whereas Dhakpa pointed out that Dolanji for him was only a temporary place to stay (*mgron po'i bsdad sa*, which literally means the guesthouse or the guest place). Both of these two views are shared by other elders in Dolanji. However, most of them, akin to Dhakpa, regarded Dolanji as a temporary place rather than a permanent homeland (*pha yul*). For these people of the first generation, 'home' refers to their home villages in Tibet where they were born, and where they had spent much of their early lives. Although these villages may have gone through a lot of changes since they left (some people had witnessed the changes during return visits, others had been told by relatives), many elders still hoped to return there before they died. They liked to share stories with their children and even grandchildren, about life in Tibet. One elderly couple from Chamdo (in Kham), whom I often visited, would always show me videos featuring scenes and monasteries in Chamdo, which they got from the monks who had recently arrived from Tibet. They would explain to me where they had lived before coming to exile, and how they used to celebrate Tibetan New Year there.

If 'home' only manifests when people are away from it (Falcone and Wangchuk 2008: 190-191), for the first generation of Tibetan refugees, 'home' may be said to have

gained its meanings and shape when they started their lives in exile. It was in their conversations with younger settlers about life in Tibet, about their local monasteries and the neighbours with whom they would play and celebrate Tibetan New Year, that images of 'home' would start to develop, providing meaning and texture to their life in exile. However, their notion of 'home' and the images associated with it are, to a certain extent, mostly 'imagined'. Although based on memories, they have also been 'fed' by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's narratives of Tibetan nationhood, scenes of Tibet from TV and videos, and accounts they may have heard from recent arrivals. This can be seen from my conversations with the elders who had made one or two visits to their home villages back in Tibet. In their accounts, although they wished they could stay there for the rest of their lives, they still felt their "*homes were not homes anymore*." They pointed out the changes to the buildings and roads, the increase in the Chinese population, and the difficulty of communication, given that many of their relatives in Tibet now spoke Chinese as their first language and utilised many Chinese terms in their local dialects. For these exiled elders, the 'home' they yearn to return to exists only in the past, or more specifically, in their memories, which they share often with their children.

For the first generation of Tibetan exiles (the Bonpo and Buddhists alike), national identity, unlike regional and religious affiliations, is a newly constructed and, arguably new concept, which has recently become significant in their lived experience. As mentioned in the Introduction, the idea that people from Kham, Amdo, and U-Tsang formed a natural unity which differentiated them from people in China, India and neighbouring countries, arose only after the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was established (Cech 1987, 1993; Houston & Wright 2003; Lopez 1998: 197; Nowak 1984; Samuel 1982, 1993a; Stoddard 1994; Thargyal 2001). With the establishment of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, from 1960 onwards, national days, such as the commemoration of the Lhasa Uprising Day and celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday, have been set up and held annually in all the exiled settlements. This leads us to ask how the first generation settlers of Dolanji have reconciled recently introduced concepts, such as the idea of a Tibetan nation, with the regional identities which had been central to their lives prior to 1959, and with their Bon religious identity which has become increasingly prominent due to their interaction with Buddhists in the early years of their exile. This question will be addressed and developed throughout the subsequent chapters.

When we ask this question of the second generation, it is important to consider how these people, born in exile, play a role in the collective movement which is remaking regional, religious and national identities in exile. Unlike the first generation, many from the second generation, for example, Rinchen and Tashi, expressed a desire to spend the rest of their lives in Dolanji. As they explained, they could not imagine how they would make a living in Tibet, because for them Tibet existed only in the accounts of first generation settlers, and in school textbooks and movies. However, at the same time, many of these settlers also remarked that they had considered making a better life in Europe or the United States. In Dolanji, some of the first settlers had migrated, or their children had migrated to the United States and Canada. These settlers came back sometimes to visit old friends and to see the monastery. Also, among the second generation, some had gone abroad for study or work and had settled there. While abroad, these people remain in close connection with their families, relatives and friends in Dolanji. They regularly send money back to their families, and send friends who visit them in India back with gifts for the Abbot and for friends in Dolanji. Those settlers from the second generation who have remained in Dolanji, often express a desire to experience life outside India, and do not mind if they have to work harder in other countries in order to make a better living.

In one of my conversations with Sonam, a business man in his early thirties, who deals in Tibetan ornaments and carpets, I asked him why many Tibetans born in India seemed eager to move abroad and had no intention of returning to India. Sonam corrected me by emphasising that there was no concept of 'abroad' for Tibetans, because every country in the world was a foreign country to them. In his words,

> "*Tibet is our country, but where can we find it now? While anyone else can point to the world map to show their country, we cannot. The place we think we belong to is under a foreign occupation now and has a foreign country's name on it. We don't have our own passports or land now. Wherever we go, we always have to be affiliated with other countries in order to live our lives. But even if we become citizens of those countries and take their passports, they are still not our countries. We know we don't belong to them. This fate of having no country will be with us for our whole lives.*"

Sonam's younger sister went to France to study several years ago and has married and settled down in the south of France. Sonam has visited his sister's family in

France several times, and also visited other countries nearby. His remark reflects the sense of powerlessness that refugees experience as "matter out of place" (Douglas 1966: 33), when struggling to fit into a world where their national identity is either denied, or ignored. However, if, as Sonam said, they don't feel that they belong to any particular country in the world, why do so many Tibetans born in India still try to migrate to other countries, particularly European countries and the United States? Sonam explained,

> "*This is simply a way of surviving. There is no country of Tibet that we can claim to belong to and to live in, but at least we can choose another country which can provide us with a better life. In fact, every country is the same for us. They are just different in terms of their living conditions*."

Sonam's reply represents how the second generation have adapted to the constraints embedded in their refugee-ness whilst, at the same time, tending to live their lives outside of these constraints and utilising the ambiguities inherent in being 'out of place' as a constitutive element of their national identity. By denying that they belong to any particular country, and by regarding their place of residence as merely a means to achieving improved living standards, Sonam's words represent a resistance by the marginalised toward the dominant. From his words, we can see that the 'out of place-ness' and 'statelessness' of Tibetans is, in fact, a powerful statement of their distinctiveness; moreover, the constraints associated with being 'out of place' can be regarded as being effective for maintaining a floating Tibetan national identity across state boundaries.

One may find that Sonam's accounts conflict with remarks made by Rinchen and Tashi. However, I argue that, instead of mutually conflicting, these views only reflect the ambiguity embedded in their refugee status in India, and in the relationship between ideology and reality. In my conversations with Rinchen and his parents, they pointed out that, although most of the Tibetans in India 'dreamed' of going to Europe and the United States to make a living, many of them were unable to do so. Given this, they have no choice but to stay in India.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that, when questioned about whether they would rather go back to Tibet or continue living in Dolanji, most of the second generation settlers (and even a few from the first generation) told me they would choose to stay

in Dolanji. In their explanations, apart from citing their familiarity with the language, food and way of life in India, they also indicated that they would rather live with Indians than with the Chinese. Many of them mentioned that, although life in India was sometimes difficult because of their refugee status, they could at least live their lives '*in freedom.*' As they stressed, '*Freedom is everything. Without freedom, not one of us would want to live in Tibet.*'

We should note that, apart from what has been learned from recent arrivals from Tibet, in large part the concepts expressed by second generation settlers about Tibet and the way of life in Tibet, have been influenced by the official discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and also, the Western media. As will be examined in subsequent chapters, the official discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has emphasised the differences between the Tibetans and the Chinese, whilst playing down the differences between the Tibetans and the Indians (Kolas 1996). Moreover, idioms and concepts, such as freedom, democracy, and human rights, are usually drawn upon to stress the changes in Tibetan society prior to and after the Chinese takeover, and between the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Chinese Government (Hess 2009; Nowak 1984). These modern idioms and concepts have become important devices by which the Tibetan Government-in-Exile expresses the images of a Tibetan nation and argues for its legitimacy in the international sphere.

As we will examine in due course, knowledge of Tibet, its past and present, which has been constructed through the celebration of national holidays (Chapter III), the charisma of the Dalai Lama (Chapter IV), and textbook knowledge (Chapter V), has informed the way that young Tibetans interpret their lives in exile, as well as their national and religious identifications. In this way, the second and third generations, who have never seen or lived in Tibet, may have a different image of Tibet compared to first generation settlers. However, I suggest that what young Tibetans have learnt about Tibet in exile has helped them to construct their own narratives of national identity, and express what it means to be a Tibetan. For example, in Sonam's accounts, Tibet is not a notion limited to a geographic area, but rather, a representation of a distinctive fate of being refugee and being stateless, which explains and maintains both who they are and who they should not be.

Besides the first and second generations, the children of the second generation are

referred to in this thesis as the third generation. In 2007-2008, those comprising the third generation of settlers were all under the age of 12. Several of these children were attending the CST Dolanji (all under Year 5), and some had not reached school age. Given their young age, this thesis does not include them in most of the discussion.

Brief Discussion of the Daily Routine of Settlers

As mentioned earlier, for the majority of the year, it is only the first generation, generally aged over 50, who reside in the settlement. Among them many are over 60. In this section, I briefly describe the daily routine of these settlers. Given their age, many of them no longer work. Some settlers help to take care of their grandchildren (most of them are under 10) as their children work in other cities. Some run grocery shops and snack bars in the settlement, while others spend their time around the shops and snack bars, drinking tea and exchanging news about the settlement. Most of these people have children and grandchildren who work or study in other cities in India or other countries. Their children usually send part of their salary back to Dolanji to support them. Apart from their children, these elders also receive financial support from the welfare division[31] of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

The older settlers would usually rise very early, at around 4 or 5 a.m. They would prostrate before the household altar, make water offerings, burn *bsang* (a ritual of purification), chant scriptures, and then go up to the monastery, circumambulating the main temple for about an hour (*skor ra*, circumambulation). While they circumambulated the temple, they would recite mantras, keeping count on prayer beads. After finishing *skor ra* and returning home, most of the women would do the housework, such as cleaning, washing, and cooking. I seldom saw male settlers doing housework. Every time I visited settlers, it was always the mother of the family or the daughters who made tea and arranged food for me. I sometimes went to the kitchen to help make Tibetan dumplings and Indian bread. While the women were busy in the kitchen, the men, who were watching TV or talking with their neighbours outside the houses, would call the women to bring tea or foods. In a few

[31] The welfare division, which is set up under the Department of Home Affairs of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, provides financial and social support to the Tibetan elders, and for those living in financial difficulty (see also http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php?id=68&rmenuid=10, 2011).

families with babies, the female settlers would spend the whole day with the children, feeding them, playing with them, and comforting them when they cried. Those who ran shops and snack bars might go there after completing their housework. There were no fixed opening times for shops in the settlement, and access depended on the daily schedules of the owners. When the owners felt tired, sick, or had too much housework, their shops would close for several days.

Sometimes settlers would spend their spare time visiting neighbours or friends in the settlement. It was common to see several lay elders (mostly males) gambling (*sho*, literally means 'dice') or playing cards, having tea, and chatting for hours (mostly females) on benches in front of houses and shops. News about settlers, including who had recently brought back a girl or a boy, and from which settlement, who had found a new job, whose daughter or daughter-in-law was pregnant, who had gone abroad or split up with his/her partner (*dga' bo*), were usually the topics of their conversations. They also liked to talk about the foreign guests and were curious to know where those guests were from and what were they doing in Dolanji. When I passed the school, usually the lay women sitting outside the shop would invite me for a cup of tea. They liked to ask me for information about the guesthouse, for example, how much rent I paid per day, when the guests had their meals, what kind of food the guesthouse served, how many guests were there now, and how long they stayed.

Sometimes, the laity received information about the foreign visitors from monks or nuns, who had students and sponsors from other countries. When the monks or nuns were on holiday, they would usually visit lay households for lunch or tea. They would bring news of monastics and sometimes of the foreigners, to the laity. It is interesting to note that the connection in regional identities was also reflected in the interactions between the lay settlers and the monastics. The laity and the monastics who shared the same village or same region of origin were always closer to each other.[32] Apart from their daily interactions, lay settlers would also prefer to have monks from the same village and region to do their household rituals, and to organise

[32] As for the nuns from the nunnery, given that most of them are from Nepal, their interaction with the settlers seemed to be less close compared to the relationship between the monks and laity. However, the nuns would also usually visit the households near the nunnery for meals and tea, and the laity would sometimes bring foods they had bought from the markets in Solan, to the nunnery.

the funeral rituals for their families.[33] Moreover, in the Geshe ceremony which celebrates the monks' completion of their study in the dialectic school, it would usually be settlers from the same region from the monks who would sponsor the cost of the ceremony.

In the afternoon, I would usually run into elders on the streets, as they were returning to the monastery for circumambulation. During my staying in Dolanji, I only saw two or three girls go with their parents or grandparents to circumambulate at the monastery. These girls were studying in other cities and only came back during their school holidays. In fact, for the majority of lay youth in the settlement, to go to the monastery for circumambulation was not part of their daily routine. Only when the whole community was gathered together in the monastery for religious ceremonies (for example, the commemorations of the first Menri Monastery abbot and the founder of the Bon religion), would second and third generation settlers take part in circumambulation.

At home, the settlers would usually remove the water offerings at sunset. There was no street lighting in the settlement. Therefore, after sunset, the whole settlement would be covered in darkness, with only the lights shining from individual houses. Then, before going to sleep, the settlers would prostrate in front of the altar, usually going to bed at around 9 p.m.

Relationship between the Bonpo Community and Neighbouring Indians

> *"Several years ago, a very serious fight broke out between boys from our settlement and the Indian boys in Kalaghat [an Indian village next to Dolanji]. I don't remember clearly how things started. It seems that one night three boys from our village got very drunk, and they met some Indian boys who were also drunk on the road. They started to shout and throw*

[33] When a death occurred in the village, the family would request a monk from Menri monastery to do the funeral rituals. Usually, monks from the same region as the deceased would be in charge of the rituals, which would be sponsored by the family of the deceased. In some cases, if the family was in financial difficulty, or if the deceased had no other family, the monastery would sponsor the rituals, and usually, monks from the same region would volunteer to help with all the needs. A group of monks would come to the household for the rituals before the body was burnt (see also Kværne 1985). On the day of cremation, the ritual would be led by the Abbot and, sometimes, the head teacher of the monastery. Some rituals might continue for 49 days after the body was burnt, depending on the amount paid by the family.

stones at each other. Then the Indians boys ran back to their homes. But after that three boys in our village then went to Kalaghat, found the Indian boys and started another fight. As more and more Indian boys gathered, the Tibetan boys tried to escape. But only two managed to run away, one boy was caught by the Indians and they beat him very hard. The boys who ran back to Dolanji found the settlement officer, who went to Kalaghat to talk with the Indians. In the end they freed the Tibetan boy."

"Next day, the Indians came to the settlement and found His Holiness [the Abbot]. They also brought a knife used by our boys in the fighting as evidence. They told H.H. that they were seriously hurt by the boys and hoped H.H. would punish them. H.H. called the three boys to the monastery, made them apologise to the Indians, and made both sides promise not to fight again. Also, H.H. asked our boys to swear that they would never drink again. We didn't actually know who had started the fight, but H.H. told us that we shouldn't fight with the Indians, under any circumstances. Since then, the Indians in the neighbouring villages respect H.H. very much, because they know that H.H. would never be biased in favour of people from the settlement. Since then, there have been no more fights."

(Thuptan, from Menri monastery, 2007)

Thuptan, a settler in his late twenties, was studying at the monastic dialectic school. The story was told when he came to the guesthouse for tea. He mentioned to the foreign guests that his right arm was really sore because the night before, when he was circumambulating the monastery in the dark, an Indian who was very drunk hit him very hard. Some foreigners suggested that he should have hit back, but Thuptan stressed that it might have turned into a fight, which was strictly forbidden by the Abbot. That was why Thuptan told us this story. The same story was also recalled by some settlers when I asked about the relationship between the Bonpo in Dolanji and the neighbouring Indians. This story is important because it reflects the crucial leadership role played by the Abbot in the settlement.

In the Introduction and early part of this chapter, I have discussed how the head of Dolanji has carefully maintained a friendly relationship with the Indian officials of the district and the state government, in order to ensure a stable environment for the survival of the Bonpo and the development of religious institutions. The above story illustrates that not only with the Indian authorities, but also with the neighbouring

Indians, the Abbot has been trying to build a harmonious relationship, by disciplining his people and advising them against fighting. According to the laity and the monks, since the serious fight several years ago, there have been no more fights between the Bonpo and Indians. As Thuptan explained, this was "*because no one from the settlement would dare to do any thing that goes against His Holiness's words*."

However, we should also note that fights between the people of Dolanji and the Indians occur rarely. As many settlers have remarked, since the settlement was founded, there have been only a few disputes between the Bonpo and Indians. According to these accounts, the relationship between the people of Dolanji and neighbouring Indians has been harmonious compared to other Tibetan settlements, where fights have erupted between settlers and Indians on a regular basis, resisting the best efforts of settlement officers and the Indian police to resolve them (see also discussions by Lau 2009; Magnusson, Nagarajarao and Childs 2008; Penny-Dimri 1994). In Dolanji, we can sometimes see Indian men drinking tea with the settlers on benches in front of the shops, talking in Tibetan. These Indians are from nearby villages and studied at the CST Dolanji. They learnt Tibetan from school textbooks and through conversations with their Bonpo classmates. Many of them speak Tibetan fluently. Some of these Indians work as taxi drivers, mostly between Dolanji/Oachghat and Solan (sometimes they even drive to Shimla, Chandigarh or Delhi). When the settlers, monks or foreigners need a taxi, they usually use these Indian drivers. Gyalpo, the guest master, who was a classmate of one of the drivers at the CST Dolanji, told me, "*These drivers are more reliable, and the price is cheaper and more reasonable*."

It is interesting to note that foreign visitors at Menri monastery have become the main source of custom for Indian taxi drivers in Solan and the neighbouring villages, and provide them with a great deal of income. The relationship between the Bonpo community and neighbouring Indian residents might be understood as being based on mutual benefit. On the one hand, the Indian shop owners, rickshaw drivers and taxi drivers rely on Menri monastery to bring in visitors from foreign countries who constitute an important source of custom. On the other hand, the leadership of the settlement relies on nearby Indian residents to co-create a stable environment, in which the Bonpo laity can live their lives harmoniously and the monastic community can concentrate on the development of religious institutions.

I suggest that it is also from the harmony embedded in the interactions between the Bonpo and the Indian residents that we can understand how the Bonpo have dealt so carefully with their marginal situation vis-à-vis both Indian society and the Tibetan community. As mentioned, the settlement was established when the support, either financially or politically, from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was absent. This meant that, without the Tibetan Government-in-Exile to help to negotiate settlement affairs with the Indian district and state authorities, the Bonpo in Dolanji had to deal with the difficulties associated with their refugee status alone. As some settlers have remembered, in the 1960s-1970s, the marginality which resulted from their exclusion by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, had limited the Bonpo from accessing the resources provided by international organisations and the Government of India, for the reestablishment of their lives in exile. In this context, the Bonpo were compelled to develop their relationship with the Indian authorities on their own. According to the settlers, if they had been unsuccessful in securing the support of the Indian authorities and neighbouring residents, who had the ultimate power over resources and the political and social networks in India, the Bonpo would have been left with nowhere to maintain their lives in exile. This explains why the Abbot, the head of the settlement, has been strict in ensuring that his people work harmoniously with the Indian community. Apart from their daily interactions and the issues concerning the foreign visitors, as will be explored in the next chapter, the Bonpo have also made efforts to introduce their religious heritage to their Indian hosts via the annual festival in Dolanji.

Conclusion

In the eyes of its neighbouring Indians, as well as the Government of India, Dolanji is one settlement among the 39 Tibetan refugee settlements now under the administration of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. However, within these 39 settlements, Dolanji is distinctive because it is the only one where the Bonpo constitute the majority of the settlement population, and, the identity of Bon dominates the organising principle of the settlement. In this chapter, it is found that the Bonpo monastics have played an important role in the running of the settlement. Also, as the findings suggest, the leadership role of the Abbot comes not from any election supervised by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, but rather, due to his status as a spiritual leader within the Bon religion. That is to say, the successive abbots of

Menri monastery will continue to hold the position of president in Dolanji, and to be involved in the secular affairs of the settlement. As has been argued, this characteristic of the settlement administration indicates that, although Dolanji has been subordinate to the supervision of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, inside the settlement, the Bonpo monastic leadership maintains an independent, and sometimes, even higher authority over the direction of settlement development. This brings us to ask: how did religion, or more specifically, the belief in Bon, bring people from different regions to live together in Dolanji? Additionally, if Dolanji was established to maintain the Bon religious traditions and to resist the marginality placed on the Bonpo by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, in what ways does the settlement open a gateway to a positive promotion of Bon identity within the Tibetan community in exile?

Chapter II.

Remaking 'Traditions': the Role of Monastics in the Formation of Bon Identity

> *"At that time [the early 1960s], our Ponlop Rinpoche [Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche] thought that if Bonpo stayed with the other Buddhist Tibetans in other settlements, mixed together with them, slowly slowly, we would lose our knowledge of our religion. In other settlements, they have their own monasteries, but not a Bonpo monastery. So, if we stayed there, we would have no choice but to go to their monasteries. Gradually, we, and especially the younger generation, would lose all sense of the difference between our religion and others.*
>
> - Tsochok, at Dolanji, 2007

Tsochok was born in Manali in the early 1960s, and moved to Dolanji with his parents in 1967. He was educated at Menri monastery for many years, and had been a Tibetan language and religious teacher in the CST Dolanji in the 1980s-1990s. After he renounced his monastic life, Tsochok worked for the settlement office, and now concentrates on his sweater business. During the summer, he usually stays in Dolanji, but moves between the cities of Delhi, Chandigarh and Mussoorie during the winter, selling Tibetan sweaters and woven carpets. Tsochok's remarks above, echoing those of many other settlers, suggest that the Dolanji settlement was founded to provide a place for the Bon monastery, and to continue and preserve 'the Bon traditions' in exile. However, why was it necessary for the Bonpo to found a settlement in order to maintain their religious identity? Why did they not simply build their own monastery in the existing Tibetan settlements, many of which had more than one monastery belonging to the different Buddhist denominations, and were supported by settlers from the same denomination?

This chapter seeks to understand the role of religion, in this case, the Bon religion, in the founding of the Dolanji settlement. First, I examine the context of the 1960s, in which the Bonpo who fled into exile in India were compelled to assert their distinctive religious identity in the emerging discourse of Tibetan nationalism. I shall argue that the assertion of identity is usually manifested via references to heritage and to the past (Cummings 2006), and that the making of an identity is, in fact, a

process of making and remaking traditions. I then explore the way the Bonpo interpret their 'Bon traditions' to validate their religious identity and interpret the relationship between Bon, Buddhism, and Tibetan national identity. I also address whether the concept of distinctive Bon traditions is a 'retrospective invention' (Trevor-Roper 1983: 15), which has only recently been emphasised in response to the marginalisation of the Bonpo by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Moreover, in this chapter I argue that the process of making traditions usually involves, and is dominated by, a group of power holders, who exercise their authority to determine and represent what is and is not 'tradition'. In the case of Tibetan refugees, the leadership of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile dominates the discourse of Tibetan nationalism and defines what constitutes 'the Tibetan traditions'. At the same time, within the Bonpo community, the Bonpo monastics dominate the construction of knowledge in respect of the Bon religion, and lead the Bonpo in negotiating and positioning their religious heritage within the discourse of Tibetan nationalism. This chapter therefore examines the way the Bonpo monastics address the concept of tradition, how they 'discover,' re-organise, and interpret 'the Bon traditions' from textual materials, and represent them in recurrent public events to the laity, the next generation, and the Indian audience.

A Note on 'Tradition'

The idea that traditions are in fact 'invented' or 'made', and the links between the invention of traditions and nationalism, have been an important domain of scholarly analyses since the early nineteen eighties. Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) is one of the pioneering works which emphasises the 'invented' characteristic of traditions. According to Hobsbawm (1983), traditions are largely invented, although they give the appearance of age, even antiquity. Traditions for him are socially and culturally constructed, and their aim is always to fulfil present day purposes. Hobsbawm maintains that research into the narratives and practices of traditions must reflect the underlying circumstances in which they emerged, in which they are given purpose and meaning. The same consideration of tradition is also shared by Trevor-Roper. In his article about Scottish traditions (1983), Trevor-Roper investigates how the traditions of Highland culture, as represented in kilts and clan tartans, were a relatively recent invention in Scottish culture. He examines the ways

in which selected textual references were forged and drawn upon to validate 'discovered' cultural characteristics, and to assert a distinctive Scottish national identity. Trevor-Roper terms the concept of making a distinctive Highland tradition a 'retrospective invention' (1983: 15), given that it reveals the creation of the past by the present. According to him, Highland traditions were invented in response to specific historical circumstances, in which there was a need to make the Scots a distinctive people. Thus, the traditions of the past were remade in order to fulfil a particular need in the present.

However, the argument that traditions are usually 'invented,' 'constructed,' or 'made' has become a subject of critical debate between anthropologists, and between researchers and indigenous scholars, concerning the authority and authenticity of the traditions in question (Briggs 1996; Clifford 2001; Friedman 1993; Linnekin 1991). Friedman (1993) argues that invention implies a sense of discontinuity, and therefore, to view the tradition as 'invented' would neglect the continuity and creativity of culture itself. Taking the movement of Hawaiian identity as an example, Friedman points out that the building of tradition is merely a practice of cultural continuity, which should be understood as a social action rather than "a rearrangement of the bits and pieces of a museum collection" (1993: 761). In his essay which rethinks the debates of authority and authenticity in the study of tradition, Briggs (1996) points out that argument about whether traditions are invented is not simply a debate between the etic and emic perspectives which have long haunted anthropologists. He argues that these debates involve a further complex interaction between political and economic forces which, from within and outside the academy and the society in question, try to build up discourses for their authority by diminishing or defending the authenticity of what are claimed to be traditions (see also Linnekin 1991: 447). These forces include researchers, native elites, state and national powers, and sometimes, international institutions. Therefore, from Briggs' perspective, the question is no longer whether or not traditions are invented, but rather, who are the authors and who are the audiences of the discourse of tradition.

Briggs' consideration points to a crucial connection between the discourse of tradition and identity. It should be noted that assertions of 'tradition' are usually aimed at manifesting and fulfilling the needs of identity, which articulate differentiations between 'us' and 'them', and which defines how people interact with

others. Identity is a fluid concept, which "allows for the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of its aspects" (Cech 1993: 42). It represents how people ascribe and signify their relationship with others, but is always modified and re-defined when the audience it addresses changes and the purpose it aims to fulfill varies (Barth 1969, 2000; Cohen 1982, 1985, 1986, 2000). This fluid characteristic of identity reflects the contradictions involved in the representation of tradition. In order to fulfill different needs and address various audiences, a group may constantly modify what they claimed to be 'tradition'.

As will be discussed in this chapter, the impetus to define the Bonpo as a distinctive religious group has only recently arisen, from 1960 onwards. In order to articulate the distinctiveness of their religious identity, and negotiate their participation in the Tibetan national community, narratives of 'Bon traditions' have been developed by Bonpo monastics in exile. I agree with Friedman that the Bonpo's claims for their religious traditions are a social action, which aims to resist their marginalisation by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and negotiate their cultural continuity in the emerging discourse of Tibetan nationalism. However, I also note that in the case of refugees, which applies to the Bonpo in Dolanji in particular and the Tibetan refugees in general, the process of self-identification involves rapid social changes, which are caused by a violently disrupted living environment. This radical change of living space has forced the refugees to adjust their practice of cultural continuity to a range of new political, economic and social factors over a rather short period of time. In this context, identity is expressed in communicating with both old and new relationships, and what are presented as 'traditions' represent "particular combinations of heterogeneous elements, old and new, indigenous and foreign" (Clifford 2001: 479). I argue that it is in these circumstances of rapid social change that the processes of selection, reconstruction, and standardisation become most visible and important in the refugees' discourse of tradition and their claims to cultural distinction.

This is why I use terms such as '(re)making' and, sometimes, '(re)invention' when addressing 'traditions' in this research. By '(re)invention' and '(re)making,' I do not mean that the traditions in question are 'made up,' nor do I intend to challenge the authenticity of what the Bonpo claim about 'Bon traditions' and what the Tibetan Government-in-Exile represents in respect of 'Tibetan traditions'. Rather, my usage

of these terms is to emphasise that the discourse of tradition involves a process of selectively remembering and connecting pasts and presents (Clifford 2001: 475). The aim of this research is therefore to unravel this process of reconstructing knowledge and revaluing and adjusting identities in situations of rapid social change. It is with this concern in mind that I suggest that the terms '(re)invention' and '(re)making' provide a better approach to understanding the interplay between the discourse of 'tradition' and the concept of identity, which constantly supply meanings and purposes to one another. Moreover, I believe that understanding the usage of these terms would also help to identify the interconnection between different forces, which affect and actively shape the way in which 'traditions' are understood and represented. In the case of the Bonpo in Dolanji, these forces include the involvement of the Bonpo monastics, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the Indian state, and the international agencies.

Struggling to Survive: the Foundation of the Dolanji Settlement

The Bonpo of the 1960s might have had a very different experience of their religious identity, and Dolanji might never have been exclusively established as a settlement of the Bonpo, had the Tibetan Government-in-Exile not formally excluded Bon in their representation of Tibetan religious traditions. As noted in the Introduction, in the 1960s-1970s, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had excluded the Bonpo from participation in its national affairs, on the basis that the Bonpo were not considered to be *nang pa* (literally means the 'Insiders,' usually translated as 'Buddhists' in English). The Bonpo, whose regional affiliations were no different to the Buddhists and whose religious practices resembled Buddhism in many ways, however, faced the dilemma of positioning their religious identity between the categories of Buddhist and non-Buddhist.

As discussed in the Introduction, the Bonpo claim a different religious founder to Buddhism, but acknowledge that they have many similarities with Buddhism. From the perspective of the Bon and Buddhist laity, the differences between Bon and Buddhism lie primarily in their founders, the direction of circumambulation, and the mantras they usually recite. Except for these differences, for the laity, Bon and Buddhism are almost the same in terms of the dress of their monastics, their practices, and their basic notions, such as karma and rebirth (Kværne 1985, 2001; Rossi 1999).

This means that, from the perspective of the laity, the differences between Bon and Buddhism are rather subtle, and can easily overlap, or be neglected. However, from the perspective of the monastics, the differences and similarities between Bon and Buddhism can be more rigorously explored, as well as contested. Nevertheless, the tensions between the Bonpo and the Buddhist population only became severe when they fled into exile, where people of different denominations were mixed together in the refugee camps. According to Cech (1987), in addition to the official ignorance of the Bon religion, intolerance of the Bonpo was also increasingly encouraged among Tibetan refugee settlements in the 1960s (cf. Cech 1987: 148). As a result, in order to survive among the exiled Tibetans, many Bonpos had no choice but to follow Buddhist practices (for example, adhere to the Buddhist direction of circumambulation), or completely suppress their Bon identity.

In this context, Manali, which is located in the north of Himachal Pradesh, gradually became the place where many Bonpos gathered in the early 1960s. One of the main reasons for this was that several important Bonpo monastics were based there, including the abbots of the former Menri and Yungdrung Ling monasteries. It was important for the Bonpo laity to settle in a place near the Bonpo monks, so that they could participate in rituals and other religious services led by their own monastics. As Tsochok suggests at the beginning of this chapter, if there had been only Buddhist monasteries and Buddhist monks in the settlement, the Bonpo would have had no choice but to go to a Buddhist monastery for circumambulation, and participate in Buddhist religious ceremonies. Tsochok's remarks reflect the subtleties in the differences between Bon and Buddhism from the perspective of the laity, and illustrate how easily the boundary between these two can become blurred. However, it was also because of the blurred boundaries, particularly among the laity, that Bon monastics deemed it to be a matter of urgency to build their own Bon monastery. For them, the only way to continue their religious identity and preserve the religious knowledge of Bon was to have at least one Bon monastery in India, which would fulfil the laity's religious needs, and provide future generations with a Bon monastic training. In addition, because the Bonpo were marginalised in most Tibetan refugee settlements and were unable to openly express their religious identity, it was essential to urgently establish a new monastery.

In 1964, Bonpo monastics, led by the abbots and head teachers from the former

Menri and Yungdrung Ling monasteries, embarked upon the search for an appropriate site for a Bonpo settlement (Cech 1987). As stated in Chapter I, the land for the settlement was purchased with help from the Catholic Relief Services. Given that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had not yet recognised Bon as being one of the Tibetan religious traditions, no financial aid was forthcoming from that quarter for the reestablishment of the Bon religion in exile. There are different opinions surrounding the final decision of the settlement site.[34] Some of my informants explained that Dolanji was chosen from a number of possibilities after divinations were made by leading monastics, from which it was proposed that Dolanji would be the best place to develop the Bonpo community and propagate the Bon religion. These remarks illustrate that the settlement was not only meant to be a base for the Bon monastery, but was intended to be the heart of Bon identity in exile.

Dolanji was therefore founded in 1967 as a settlement for the Bonpo, and Menri monastery was established two years after (Lhagyal 2003; Kværne 1990). The name 'Menri' was adopted from the former Menri monastery in Tibet, referring to the fact that the monastery in Dolanji was to be the continuation of the former Menri monastery. However, we noted in Chapter I that, although they shared the religious identity of Bon, the first generation of settlers of Dolanji were diverse in their regions of origin and belonged to different local Bon monasteries in Tibet. This may raise the question of why, among all the Bon monasteries in Tibet, was the Menri monastery chosen to be (re)constructed in Dolanji? Was it because the former Menri monastery was of special significance to the Bonpo?

The Menri Monastery in Dolanji

> *"For older people, like my grandparents and parents, they see this Menri [in Dolanji] as the same as the one located in Tibet. They feel it's especially important that they will die near this holy monastery. Many old people want to die here [in Dolanji] because of Menri monastery and the Abbot. This makes Dolanji special for them. In Tibet, Bonpos used to make pilgrimages to old Menri and to see its abbot. Menri was always the*

[34] Cech (1987) points out that a place was initially found next to the Clement Town settlement near Dehradun (Uttar Pradesh). However, the Government of India stopped the transaction just as the contract for the land was about to be signed. In Cech's words, certain Bonpos consider that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was behind this action.

foremost among all the Bon monasteries. The rest are like branches of Menri. So, for the elders in Dolanji, they feel they are very lucky because now they can see the abbot of Menri often."

(Yung Drung, 2007)

"In Tibet now, if someone [Bonpo] dies, their family usually phones and requests the Menri monastery in Dolanji to carry out special rituals, which are for the good rebirth of the dead. Yes, every Bon monastery can do this, but most Bonpos want the Menri Rinpoche [Abbot] to perform the prayer because he is the highest leader in Bon. People think that a prayer from him is very powerful. Also, if Bonpos in India die in other settlements, for example, last month one old woman died in Manali, their bodies are usually transported to Dolanji, and Rinpoche [Abbot] along with the rest of us [the monks] will perform the rituals for them. The Menri monastery in Dolanji is now the highest religious centre for all the Bonpo."

(Geshe Sherab, 2008)

Yung Drung was born and grew up in Dolanji. He was studying at the Menri dialectic school when this research was being conducted. The above conversation occurred when I attended the annual ceremony for the first Menri abbot. I was curious to know how the older settlers felt when they attended the ceremony, and was surprised to find that Menri monastery was so important, not only for the monastics, but also for the laity. The above excerpt was Yung Drung's translation of his grandparents' answers, in which he added some of his opinions. Unlike Yung Drung, Geshe Sherab was born in Tibet. He came to Dolanji for dialectic study, and had been studying at Menri monastery for fourteen years. It should be noted that Yung Drung and Geshe Sherab's remarks were largely in agreement with most of the Bonpo inside and outside Dolanji (including the laity and the monastics). Reflecting on their statements, it is clear that Menri monastery in Dolanji is highly important to the Bonpo both inside and outside Tibet. Additionally, the remarks demonstrate that, prior to 1959, the former Menri monastery had been regarded as the highest religious centre for both lay and monastic Bonpo.

The Menri monastery in Dolanji was established in 1969, and, as already mentioned, it was built as a continuation of the former Menri monastery in Tsang, Tibet. In the

discussion that follows, the Menri monastery in Tibet is referred to as the old Menri monastery, in order to distinguish it from the Menri monastery in Dolanji. Having been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the old Menri monastery was re-constructed from 1984 onwards (Karmay 2005a: 159-279; Lhagyal 2003: 29).[35] However, as pointed out by both Yung Drung and Geshe Sherab, for Bonpos inside and outside Tibet, the leading role once played by the old Menri monastery was effectively transferred to the new Menri monastery once it was established in Dolanji. The Abbot of Dolanji, who is the 33rd Menri abbot, is also regarded as the spiritual leader of the Bon religion by Bonpo across the world. This special status of the Menri monastery in Dolanji has significantly affected the way the settlers of Dolanji, particularly the first generation, understand their life experience in exile. Moreover, as I shall suggest, it has also played an important role in the formation of Bon identity and the discourse relating to 'Bon traditions.' As Yung Drung said, most of the elders feel that Dolanji is special because it is the site of Menri monastery and the residence of the Abbot. Cech (1987) also found that Dolanji has become the centre of the Bon identity for the Bonpo in India, Tibet and other Himalayan areas, including Nepal and Bhutan. Therefore, although they are situated on the margins of Tibetan society in exile, for most of the Bonpo in Dolanji, they are at the centre of the worldwide Bonpo community.

In brief, it can be seen that the Menri monastery in Dolanji has not only succeeded in being a religious centre of Bon monastic studies, but most crucially, it has also served to enact and invoke the sentiments and solidarity of the Bon identity among all of the Bonpo. This leads us to ask how the Bonpo monastics in Dolanji were able to assume a leading position in representing Bon identity and negotiating with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile for the relationship between Bon and Buddhism. However, before moving on to the role of monastics in the (re)making of Bon identity in exile, it is necessary to review the role played by the old Menri monastery prior to 1959. The remarks from the settlers suggest that the Bonpo's great respect and strength of feeling for the Menri monastery in Dolanji are connected to the esteem in which the old Menri monastery was held. In view of this, an examination of the old Menri monastery will provide an insight into the great significance that the Menri monastery in Dolanji has for each and every Bonpo.

[35] As Karmay has pointed out, many Bon monasteries in Tibet were destroyed and damaged by the Chinese Government during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), as were the monasteries belonging to the four Buddhist sects (Karmay 2005a: 159-279).

The Old Menri Monastery in Tibet

The old Menri monastery was founded in 1405 by Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen (*mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan*) (1356-1415) in Tob Gyal (*thob rgyal*), in Shigatse, Tsang (Lhagyal 2003: 29). This monastery was founded to replace the Yeru Ensakha monastery, which was destroyed by a flood in 1386. Before it was destroyed, the Yeru Ensakha monastery was famous for its teaching of Bonpo dialectic studies, and Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen had been one of its head teachers (*g.yas ru dben sa kha*). Evan now, the treatises produced by the monastics of Yeru Ensakha monastery are still considered as authoritative representations of Bon doctrine, and adopted as compulsory texts in every Bon monastery.

With the loss of Yeru Ensakhs monastery, Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen believed that it was essential to urgently establish a new monastery, to enable Bonpo scholars to continue their work and provide future generations with access to dialectic studies and monastic training. Having founded the old Menri monastery, he set up a structure of monastic organisation and codified the monastic disciplines into regulations. The structure and the regulations of the old Menri monastery therefore, became a reference model for subsequent Bon monasteries in Tibet. When the Menri monastery in Dolanji was established, it also adopted the organisation and regulations of the old Menri monastery. In addition to these contributions, Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen and his successors also wrote many important treatises, including texts concerning Bon rituals. These works are still studied by Bonpo monks today, and are compulsory for students of Bon dialectic schools (Cech 1987; Karmay 2005a: 159-279; Lhagyal 2003: 29-31).[36]

Apart from the old Menri monastery, the former Yungdrung Ling monastery also played an important role in Bon studies prior to 1959. The Yungdrung Ling monastery was founded in Tsang in 1834 by Dawa Gyaltsen, a monk from the old Menri monastery. This monastery was established as the centre of Bon dialectic training. Although the old Menri monastery provided the monks with dialectic teachings, it did not provide systematic training in dialectics. In view of this, Dawa Gyaltsen founded the Yungdrung Ling monastery, and, with the help of Nyima

[36] Among these treatises, those written by Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen, Nyima Tenzin (the 23rd Menri abbot, 1813-1836), and previous Bonpo scholars of Yeru Ensakha monastery were regarded by every Bonpo dialectic school as the three main authorities in the representation of Bon doctrine.

Tenzin, the 23rd Menri abbot, he established the dialectic school in Yungdrung Ling. Nyima Tenzin was also the first head tutor (Ponlop, *dpon slob*) of the Yungdrung Ling dialectic school. The old Menri monastery and former Yungdrung Ling monastery had been close to each other, not only in terms of their geographical location, but most significantly, in the way they cooperated in the development of Bon studies (Lhagyal 2003: 34-35). The monks of Menri and Yungdrung Ling used to visit each other and received religious instruction from both establishments. Before the old Menri monastery founded its own dialectic school in 1947,[37] its monks used to go to the Yungdrung Ling monastery to pursue dialectic studies. After graduating from the Yungdrung Ling dialectic school, these monks would become candidates for the abbotship of the old Menri monastery. This close relationship developed further when, in the 1950s, the monks from the old Menri and Yungdrung Ling monasteries fled into exile.

The establishment of the Bonpo settlement and the Menri monastery in Dolanji was primarily organised by a group of Bonpo monastics, led by Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the chief tutor from the old Menri monastery, and Sherab Tenpai Gyaltsen, the abbot of the former Yungdrung Ling monastery. As soon as the Menri monastery was established, Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche took responsibility for teaching the young monks, and Sherab Tenpai Gyaltsen became the head lama of the monastery, and the first president of the settlement (Cech 1987; Skorupski 1981). However, Sherab Tenpai Gyaltsen did not take the position of abbot. Instead, he arranged an election ceremony to choose the 33rd abbot.[38] As indicated by the title which they would receive, the person chosen would be regarded as the successor of Sherab Lodro, the 32nd abbot of the old Menri monastery who had passed away before Dolanji was founded (Ramble & Kind 2003: 736-740). In this election ceremony, Sangye Tenzin was chosen and given the name, Lungtok Tenpai Nyima. He and Sherab Tenpai Gyaltsen worked together as heads of the Menri monastery and settlement until 1969, when Sherab Tenpai Gyaltsen passed away. The presidency of the settlement was then assumed by Lungtok Tenpai Nyima.

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[37] It was not until 1947 that the old Menri monastery opened its own dialectic school. Its first head tutor was Sangye Tenzin. He fled to India with his successor, Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, and passed away in Dolanji in 1974 (Cech 1987). After the Menri monastery and its dialectic school were reconstructed in Dolanji, Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, who also held the position of director in the settlement committee (Chapter I), continued as head tutor until he left Dolanji for Nepal.

[38] As described by Skorupski (1981) and Cech (1987), in this election ceremony, the papers on which the names of six Bonpo Geshes (*dge bshes*) were written were placed in a vase. All the monks in the monastery then began to pray, requesting the Bonpo deities and protectors to choose the next Menri abbot from these candidates. Finally, the paper with Sangye Tenzin's name on it fell out of the vase.

This historical review indicates that the important role played by the old Menri monastery was initially due to the fact that it was founded to succeed Yeru Ensakha monastery. The old Menri monastery had developed to become the heart of the Bon religion, not only in terms of the preservation and practice of Bon teachings, but also in serving as place for Bonpo scholars to gather to undertake research related to the Bon religion. As Cech (1987) points out, prior to 1959, the old Menri monastery, to which monks from other Bon monasteries would usually go to receive higher religious training, was regarded as being the highest centre for the study of Bon doctrine. The high status held by the old Menri was inherited by the Menri monastery in Dolanji. Until recently, many Bonpo monks in Tibet, such as Geshe Sherab, had been sent by their monasteries to Dolanji, to enrol in the dialectic school and receive the teachings of the Bon religion. Having completed their dialectic studies in Dolanji, some of these monks returned to their home monasteries in Tibet. Many of them became abbots of their local monasteries. Lhawang, also from Tibet and a monastic student in Dolanji, explained that this is because "*people think the education from Menri is the best among all the Bon monasteries.*" He maintains that, "*When a monk receives his Geshe degree from Menri, people will have confidence that his knowledge of Bon will make him best placed to lead the local monastery*."

In brief, the old Menri monastery represented the highest authority on Bon doctrines for Bonpo monastics, and for the laity, it was like the Holy Land. They all aimed to make a pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime, and some wished that they could die there. The high esteem in which the old Menri monastery was universally held, explains why Bonpo monastics considered building a monastery which represented the old Menri, in Dolanji. Given that conditions were difficult for Bon in the 1960s, both in Tibet and in exile,[39] building a Bon monastery which would succeed the most authoritative monastery in Bon history was therefore of the highest priority for Bonpo monastics in exile.

We should note that the concern to 'reconstruct' monasteries outside Tibet to represent the preservation and continuity of religious traditions is not exclusive to the Bonpo in terms of Tibetan refugees. It can also be commonly observed in the four Buddhist denominations. From 1960 onwards, the Buddhists within the Tibetan

[39] For ten years from 1966, the Cultural Revolution in Tibet destroyed and damaged most of the monasteries in Tibet, including Bon monasteries.

refugee communities had also embarked on a programme to rebuild their religious institutions and monuments in exile (Anand 2000; Diehl 1997; Kolas 1996). Many important Buddhist monasteries, for example, the three main Gelug-pa monasteries (Sera, Drepung and Ganden), were 're-established' with the same names in Tibetan settlements in India, in order to preserve 'Tibetan traditions' outside Tibet. Moreover, monuments and institutions were established with names which represented important sites or institutions in Tibet. For example, the Norbulingka Institute in Dharamsala was established in order to preserve Tibetan art and culture in exile, taking its name from the summer palace of the Dalai Lamas prior to 1959 (Anand 2000; Hess 2009; Kolas 1996).

These 'reconstructions' represent a process of remaking traditions among both Bon and Buddhist Tibetan refugees. However, although the Bonpo were part of this wave of 'reconstructing' religious traditions in exile, their concern for tradition seems to be slightly different from that of the Buddhists. Reflecting on the official discourse of Tibetan nationalism in the 1960s-1970s, there is no doubt that the four Buddhist denominations belonged to a 'shared' Buddhist heritage of Tibetan culture. That is to say, their religious identities had been positioned as representative of Tibetan culture and national identity. Therefore, whilst the Buddhists were 'reconstructing' their religious monuments and institutions in exile, what they claimed to be traditions were simultaneously coterminous with Tibetan national identity. However, in the case of the Bonpo, because of the marginality of their religious identity, the Bonpo's 'reconstruction' of their religious institutions in exile faced difficulty in gaining recognition. Given this, the Bonpo's claims for their religious traditions from 1960, have sought to negotiate the recognition of Bon identity in relation to Tibetan nationalism. To do so, Bonpo monastics emphasise that the tradition of Bon is distinctive from that of Buddhism; furthermore, they stress that 'the Bon traditions' are an important source of key reference points which frame Tibetan culture, in addition to the influence of Buddhism.

However, how do the Bonpo represent their religion in distinction to Buddhism, whilst simultaneously positioning their 'Bon traditions' within 'the Tibetan traditions' as a whole? The subsequent section seeks to examine the ways in which the Bonpo monks represent the discourse of 'Bon traditions.' It is argued that monastics have played a crucial role in communicating and directing how Bonpos

should be remembered as being Bonpos within the Tibetan national discourse. I will examine the ways in which the Bonpo monastics narrate and '(re)discover' what they consider to be 'Bon traditions,' and the ways in which they incorporate '(re)discovered' traditions into annual public events. Additionally, the distinctiveness of Bon to the laity, to the next generation, and to a wider range of audience, i.e. Indians, will also be addressed.

The Masked Dance (*'cham*) Festival and (Re)discovered Traditions

This section focuses on the Cham (*'cham*) festival, one of the annual ceremonies held by Menri Monastery in Dolanji, in order to understand how 'traditions' are reframed with new meanings which help to emphasise a distinctive Bon identity. The Cham festival is made up of a series of masked dances (*'cham*) performed by monks dressed in colourful costumes and masks. Cham has a ritual purpose; it is the dance of religious protectors and deities. Cham dances can be commonly observed in the Tibetan cultural area, including Bon and Buddhist monasteries. In her article, 'Taming the Earth, Controlling the Cosmos: Transformation of Space in Tibetan Buddhist and Bon-po Ritual Dances' (1999), Schrempf examines how the performance of Cham transforms the performers and audience into a sacred space which represents itself as a *mandala*. *Mandala* is a Sanskrit word which means 'circle.' In the Bon and Buddhist contexts, *mandala* is a circular form of sacred landscape, in which deities reside. In other words, the *mandala* depicts the cosmic order of religious deities, some of whom are considered to be the enlightened ones (Buddha). There are many different kinds of *mandala* in terms of different deities and different ritual purposes (Tachikawa 2000). According to Schrempf, in the performance of Cham, through the dance layout and movements, the area of the dance is transformed into a 'great *mandala* of action,' in which the performers are transformed into deities and protectors, and act to tame the evil forces. As she puts it:

> *"The main esoteric purpose of a 'cham is said to be the expulsion of 'evil forces' by which all participants and the local environment are purified. It is also believed to procure blessings or empowerment (byin-rlabs) for all participants, to generate faith in the lay audience and to be a Tantric method of realisation for the monks"* (1999: 200).

As Schrempf has put it, for the laity in Bon and Buddhism, Cham is a sacred performance of their religious protectors, through which the 'evil forces,' which may cause obstacles and sickness, are subdued. It is important to note that, although the Cham dances of Bon and the four Buddhist denominations share the same purpose, their details are varied, such as the images of religious protectors and the particulars of the costumes (Karmay 1983). According to the monks in Dolanji, it is from these details that the differences between Bon and Buddhism, and also, between Buddhist denominations, are presented, and can be noted. For the monastic performers, these details, which are associated with their denominational traditions, are significant because they mark an inflexible boundary for their religious identity, which cannot easily be crossed, and which is strictly maintained. Moreover, even within the same denomination, the Cham performances of different monasteries are usually slightly different.

I take this festival as an example because it represents a similarity between Bon and Buddhism in the first place. It is interesting to see how, from this similarity, the Bonpo monastics negotiated its distinctive identity in respect to Buddhism, by representing what they '(re)discovered' to be the Bon tradition in the Cham festival in Dolanji. We will see that, in this process of selecting and reconstructing what are considered to be 'Bon traditions,' the distinctive origins of Bon have been consciously emphasised and displayed in the Cham festival over the past decade. This prompts us to consider why a conscious effort has been made to focus on the Cham festival in order to highlight the fundamental differences which exist between Bon and Buddhism. But why this particular festival, and to whom is this festival aimed in representing this difference?

Audience for Cham in Dolanji

In 2007-2008, the Cham festival was held on the first Sunday after the Tibetan New Year. Cech's ethnography of Dolanji (1987) indicates that, in the early 1980s, Cham was scheduled to take place on the first or second day of the Tibetan New Year. As my informants from Menri monastery explained, Cham had been re-scheduled to Sunday in the past decades because Sunday is a public holiday for everyone in India. According to them, if Cham is held on Sunday, more people, in particular Indians who do not celebrate the Tibetan New Year, can attend this festival in Dolanji.

However, why is it important that Indians should participate in this festival, which is a sacred ceremony associated with the religious lives of the Bonpo?

It is interesting to note that the audience for the Cham festival in Dolanji is not only Bonpo. There are many Indians from the neighbouring villages. In addition, Indian officials from Solan, and sometimes from the district office of Sirmaur, are invited by Menri monastery as special guests. The monastery, with the help of lay settlers, provides free lunch for all of the participants. It seems that this festival is not only held to maintain its ritual purpose for the Bonpo, but is also consciously promoted as a public event for the Bonpo's Indian neighbours to receive Bonpo hospitality. Moreover, inviting Indian officials from local and district offices as special guests shows that the Bonpo leadership intends to actively demonstrate their hospitality to the Indian authorities, and also maintain a friendly relationship with them. These efforts of the monastic leadership highlight the status of the Bonpo in India, namely, as refugees. As emphasised by the Abbot, as refugees of Tibetan origin, the Bonpo are 'guests' (*mgron po*) in India. Therefore, they have to handle their relationship with neighbouring Indians and Indian authorities with care. The Abbot's cautious management of foreign visitors, in order not to displease the Indian authorities, has already been discussed in the Introduction and Chapter I. Also, as mentioned, the Abbot has always taken pains to remind settlers to live peacefully with their Indian neighbours, and warns them not to pick fights with Indians. Apart from these precautions, the monastic leadership also actively works to develop their relationship with Indians, and the Cham festival is one example of this. According to the Bonpo monks, they consider Cham as being the best occasion to demonstrate the attractions of Tibetan culture and Bon religion to their Indian neighbours because, although it is in essence a religious ceremony for the Bonpo, it also features dance, music, and performers wearing colourful costumes and masks.

Apart from the Bonpo's Indian neighbours and Indian officials, residents from Kinnaur (*khu nu*), known as Kinnauri (Takahashi 2001), are also invited to watch, and in the past few years, participate by performing a dance called Shon (*shon*), which has recently been added to the very end of the whole festival. Having studied this dance, it seems that, according to the Bonpo monastics, it is closely related to the culture of Zhangzhung, which the Bonpo insist is the origin of their religion. Subsequent sections will contain an exploration of the Bonpo's narratives in relation

to this dance and their religious origin, in order to understand why Zhangzhung has been emphasised by the Bonpo as representing their distinctive religious identity. Moreover, the reaction of the laity to this recently-added performance will also be examined, with an investigation into how settlers of different generations understand the connection between Bon and Zhangzhung, which is considered to be important by Bonpo monastics.

Content of Cham in Dolanji

Cham performances are usually presented as a series of dances. The Cham performances of each Bon monastery are slightly different to one another (Karmay 1983), but they are all centred on stories of the main protector of Bon, Sipa Gyalmo (*srid pa'i rgyal mo*, Queen of the Universe). The main theme in Bon Cham relates to Sipa Gyalmo, her various emanations and her retinue; dances representing other Bon protectors and deities, or stories related to specific textual or local contexts, are added selectively as subordinate themes. Sometimes a few dance sets are presented merely for the purpose of entertainment, for example, the Snow Lion dance and the Yak dance, which may also be accompanied by clowns. Overall, the Cham dances performed by the Bon monasteries share a basic similarity, containing the images of the main protectors, the myths associated with the protectors, and generally similar costumes. However, according to the Bonpo monks, the ways of presentation vary in terms of individual monastic traditions. The structure of the series, the number of sets, the number of performers, and sometimes, the steps and hand gestures, are also slightly different depending on the monastery. Each monastery has its own structure of series of Cham, which may incorporate stories of local deities and their monastic figures. The Bonpo monks told me that, the Cham dances in some monasteries are said to have been set up by a famous monastic, who, as a great practitioner, received knowledge of a particular form of Cham while in meditation, from a particular religious protector or deity.

The flexibility and diversity reflected in the forms of Cham indicate that, compared to other sacred ceremonies, for example, ceremonies of the founder of Bon and the first Menri abbot, Cham may more readily incorporate new elements from immediate social and historical circumstances, and therefore reflect social change. This characteristic of Cham opens up a possibility for the monastic leadership of each

monastery to modify their performances of Cham to adjust to the needs of local communities and monasteries. If we apply this flexibility of Cham when examining the Cham dances in Dolanji, it raises the question of whether the Cham which is performed at Menri monastery today is also a 'modified' form, which has been re-structured in order to adapt to the specific circumstances of exile.

As already noted, the Menri monastery in Dolanji was established as a continuation of the old Menri monastery. Therefore, one may consider that the Cham dances performed by Menri monastery today follow the form of the old Menri monastery. However, according to my informants from the monastery, the Cham dances in Dolanji bear little resemblance to those of the old Menri. Rather, they are a complex mix from different sources. In 2007-2008, the Cham in Dolanji comprised eight sets in which Bonpo protectors and deities were presented. In addition to these, five sets were included for the purpose of entertainment. The main eight sets were 1) Magyu Tshog Cham (*ma rgyud tshogs 'cham*); 2) Shenrab Yungdrung Gu Cham (*gshen rab g.yung drung dgu 'cham*); 3) Ze Gya Par Sum Cham (*gze gyad spar gsum 'cham*)[40]; 4) Dral Tab Cham (*gral bstab 'cham*); 5) Srigyal Du Dru Cham (*srid rgyal dus drug 'cham*)[41]; 6) Nam Gyed Cham (*rnam brgyad 'cham*); 7) A Tsa Ra Cham (*a tsa ra 'cham*)[42]; and 8) Ging Cham (*ging 'cham*). These sets presented nine main protectors (led by Sipa Gyalmo and her emanations) and twenty seven deities of Bon. When the dances began, household heads offered the silk scarves (*kha btags*) to the character of Sipa Gyalmo which, according to the Bonpo monks, was an offering from laity to their main protector. Distinct from the eight sets which formed the main theme of the Cham dance, the five sets performed for entertainment purposes were: 1) Deer Cham (*shva 'cham*), 2) Snow Lion Cham (*sing 'cham*), 3) Yak Cham (*g.yag 'cham*), 4) Tiger Cham (*stag 'cham*), 5) Garuda Cham (*khyung rtse*).

[40] This set includes three subordinate sets, namely, Zema Gu (*gze ma dgu*), Gya Mo Gu (*gyad mo dgu*), and Par Mo Gu (*spar mo dgu*), which represent 27 Bonpo deities. According to my monastic informants from Menri monastery, at the time Karmay wrote his article about Cham (1983) in Dolanji, there was only Zema Gu Cham, in which 9 deities were presented. The other two subordinate sets, namely, Gya Mo Gu (*gyad mo dgu*) and Par Mo Gu (*spar mo dgu*), have only recently been added by the Abbot in the past two decades, in order to present the entire 27 deities of Bon.

[41] This set presents the emanations of Sipa Gyalmo in six different time periods.

[42] This dance is performed in both monasteries of Bon and Buddhism. It involves the story of an Indian master, Acharya. The story is that Acharya came to Tibet to search for wealth, particularly gold, for their secret and mystical teachings. One day he stole a box from the temple thinking that it may have contained some treasure. However, the box was filled with Bon texts. Eventually, Acharya had to exchange this box with the monastery for food.

Geshe Gelek, a senior monk in his late thirties, pointed out that Cham in Dolanji is primarily based on the Cham from Jadur Monastery, one of the Bon monasteries in Tibet, because it was initially taught by a monk from that monastery, known as Jadur Kelsang. According Geshe Gelek and his monastic colleagues, when Menri monastery was established in Dolanji, Jadur Kelsang was the only monastic with sufficient knowledge of the performance of Cham, since he had been the leading Cham dancer in Jadur Monastery. Given this, the Abbot relied on Jadur Kelsang's knowledge to set up the Cham for the annual Cham festival. As Geshe Gelek said: *"At that time, the Abbot had no choice but to follow the Cham tradition from Jadur Monastery. Lama Jadur Kelsang was the only monk at that time who knew properly about Cham".*

However, the Abbot did not adopt all the sets from Jadur Monastery. As many of the monks pointed out, some of the main sets, for example, the first three sets, were set up by the Abbot by referring to the Bon texts. This can also be understood from Karmay's article (1983), which discusses the first three Cham dances. As Karmay mentions, the Abbot used to take part in the Cham performances in his home monastery, Phuntsog Dargye Ling Monastery, in Amdo, before he fled into exile. Therefore, the Abbot already knew a great deal about Cham when he took up the leadership of Menri monastery. In addition to his experience, the Abbot carried out some research into the Cham performances as represented in the Bon texts. In the 1970s, he set up Magyu Tshog Cham, Zema Gu Cham, and Shenrab Yungdrung Gu Cham in Menri monastery in Dolanji (Karmay 1983).

In brief, we find that the Cham series in Dolanji today is a combination from various sources, including the Cham of Jadur Monastery, the Abbot's experience of Cham from Phuntsog Dargye Ling Monastery, and above all, the Bon textual materials which provide the main sets of Cham with an 'authoritative' reference. As already mentioned, the purpose of Cham usually relates to the needs of the local community, and the particular forms of Cham often reflect specific social and historical contexts. When applying these characteristics to the Cham dances in Dolanji, I suggest that the Cham dances in Dolanji represent two main social experiences undergone by the settlement, that is, the refugees' struggle in the host society, and position of Bonpo within the wider Tibetan population. As is known, in the 1960s-1970s, the Bonpo were not only marginalised by their host society in terms of their status as refugees,

but further, by the Buddhist majority within Tibetan refugees in terms of their Bon religious identity. As such, the Bonpo have been compelled to 'reconstruct' their traditions within their host society, and also, to claim their religious identity within the Tibetan refugee population.

In her article on the Cham festival in Dolanji in 1995, Schrempf notes that this event represents a crucial aspect of the 'politics of performance' (1997: 94). She regards this festival as a social and cultural event, which represents "a link established by a refugee community with its hosts in order to maintain a good relationship with the local population and reinforce historical bonds between their religion and the local Indian context" (cf. 1997: 94). In addition to this link with Indian hosts, I suggest that the Cham festival also provides the Bonpo monastics with an occasion on which they aim to emphasise their distinctive religious identity, which had been marginalised by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. This can be understood from the fact that the main sets of Cham dances were 'reconstituted' around Bon texts (Karmay 1983; Schrempf 1997: 93-94).

Because of the lack of Cham from the old Menri monastery, the monastic leadership in Dolanji adopted traditional forms of Cham from other Bon monasteries, and modified them in accordance with textual materials into a new form for Menri monastery. This process indicates that textual materials have become a source of authority for the empowerment of Cham. I suggest that the Bonpo monastics' reliance on the Bon texts to 'reconstitute' the Cham dances cannot simply be understood as a process of 'reconstructing' traditions in exile, but rather, it also represents an attempt to claim a distinctive 'orthodox' Bon tradition, clearly distinguished from Buddhism. In the process of 'reconstituting' (Karmay 1983) the Cham traditions, the textual materials, in which the 'orthodox' traditions of Bon were considered to have been recorded and remain 'unchanged,' became the authoritative sources for Bonpo monastics to represent 'Bon traditions,' as differentiated from Buddhism. This attempt to deploy textural authority in order to negotiate Bon identity is further evidenced by a new set of dance, Shon (*shon*), which has been incorporated in the Cham festival over the past decade.

Unlike the whole Cham series, which is performed by the monks, Shon is performed by the Indian residents of Kinnaur, and it has no ritual purpose. The Shon dance is

performed as a separate set from the whole Cham series. However, it is included within the festival, and marks its end. According to the Bonpo monks, this dance was recently 'discovered' to be an ancient dance of the Bon religion, as represented in the Bon texts. Given that Shon is not presented as part of the Cham and does not contain a ritual purpose like Cham, why has it been added to the festival over the past decade? Moreover, how did the Bonpo monastics 'discover' the relationship between this dance and Bon, and why is it important to emphasise this relationship?

'Rediscovered' Shon (shon) Dance at the Annual Cham Festival in Dolanji

In 2007 and 2008, Shon was performed at the very end of the festival. When the last set of masked dances finished, around ten to fifteen residents from Kinnaur, wearing Indian dress and distinctive green and grey woollen caps (*thepang*), were invited to the foreground by the monastics. They joined hands in a long line, which, according to the Bonpo monks, represented a chain of swastikas (Yungdrung, *g.yung drung*), and began to sing and dance. The tone of the song was low, and when I asked the monks nearby about the language the performers were singing in, they answered me, "*That was Zhangzhung language, but we don't really know their lyrics. They [Kinnauri performers] don't know either, because the written language of Zhangzhung is almost lost*". The dance leader held a yak's tail and waved it during the dance (Plates 8-9). The dancers moved in a counter-clockwise direction, which, again according to the Bonpo monastics, was identical to the direction of the Bonpo's circumambulation.

During this performance, the Abbot explained the dance and its relationship with the Bonpo to two Indian officials who sat next to him. A senior monk, representing Menri monastery, went to each Kinnauri performer to offer him/her a silk greeting scarf. However, many of the older settlers began to pack their bags, and left during the Shon performance. Some of them explained to me that they were tired and were in a hurry to go home to cook dinner. Some said that it was a 'Kinnauri dance', which was presented because the monastery wanted to give Indians a chance to display their traditions too, and if I hadn't seen it before, I should stay to watch. Only some of the second generation laity, along with almost all of the monks, stayed until the end of the Shon performance. So, what is this dance, which does not quite fit into

the Cham series, and in which many laity, in particular the first generation, seem to have no interest? Also, why is it performed by people from Kinnaur instead of the Bonpo?

In Cech's ethnography (1987), there is no reference to a dance called Shon in the annual Cham festival. The monks from Menri monastery confirmed to me that Shon had only recently been included in the Cham festival by the Abbot, in the past few years. Dechen and Sangmo, two girls who were attending Year 8 classes in the CST Dolanji, tried to explain the dance to me:

> *"This is a very old dance in Zhangzhung. Our Bon religion is from Zhangzhung. In ancient times, we danced this, but now we have lost it. Now only people from Kinnaur still have knowledge of this dance. They were actually from Tibet. A long time ago, they moved to Kinnaur, so they share elements of ancient culture with our Bonpos."*

Yung Drung and his monastic colleagues also provided me with an explanation which, according to them, was based on the Bon texts. According to them, the Bon texts recount that, wherever Tonpa Shenrab went, his followers would perform a dance called Shon in their ceremony to welcome him. The Bon texts also detail how this dance should be performed.[43] However, this dance has long been regarded by the Bonpo monastics as a 'lost tradition', which had vanished after Zhangzhung was annexed by the Yarlung Dynasty. It was not until the Bonpo fled to India that Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche visited Kinnaur in North India and found that Shon was still being performed by the people of Kinnaur. According to the Bonpo monks, although the people of Kinnaur did not know the origins of this dance, they regarded it as being a traditional dance which had survived from antiquity (see also Bellezza 2005: 184). In

[43] An article entitled 'The Performance of Yungdrung Shon' (Yungdrung Shon-tse, *g.yung drung shon rtsed*) (2005), written by Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang, was published in Bon-sGo (*bon sgo*), the annual journal of Menri monastery. Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang graduated from the Menri dialectic school in 2008, and specialises in research on Zhangzhung. In this article, he details the origin, the way of performance, and the historical context of Shon, based on the Bon texts, and co-examines the texts with the performances he saw and the interviews he conducted with elders from the border areas of Nepal and India. In the article, Shon was referred as 'Yungdrung Shon-tse.' 'Yungdrung' indicates the form of swastika presented in the way the dancers joined their hands, and 'tse' (*rtsed*) means performance. I translated part of this article from Tibetan into English during my visit to the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, 2011. Permission to translate it was granted by Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang, who also agreed to double check the completed translation. Moreover, the work for this translation relied on advice and invaluable assistance from Professor Yasuhiko Nagano and Dr Shinichi Tsumagari who helped me to read the article, and co-checked my translation. The findings from this short-term research are likely to be developed into a further project over the next one to two years.

their words, it was not until Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and some Bonpo monastic scholars from Dolanji cross-examined the style of this dance in Kinnaur with the description in the Bon texts that its connection to the Bon religion was confirmed and the relationship between Bon and the culture of Zhangzhung further demonstrated. This is why the Abbot invites the people of Kinnaur to perform the Shon dance, which is now regarded by the Bonpo monastics as a 'living tradition' from Zhangzhung. Yung Drung remarked, "*We also call this dance the Zhangzhung dance, since Zhangzhung is the place from which Bon religion and culture originated*".

The remarks made by the Bonpo students and monks are representative of Zhangshung's role as a key element in Bonpo narratives on the origins of their religion, adopted in order to substantiate a clear distinction between Bon and Buddhism. Moreover, the monastics' explanations also indicate that textual materials have been used as authoritative sources in order to authenticate the dance. It seems that textual materials have become the main source from which 'Bon traditions' are rediscovered, and the authenticity of these traditions has been cross-examined and confirmed. Is it true that the people of Kinnaur today share cultural roots with the Bonpo, through Zhangzhung culture? Why do the Bonpo have to insist on their religious connection to Zhangzhung in order to emphasise their distinctive identity? Moreover, how do Bonpo monastics weave their narratives of Zhangzhung into Tibetan nationalism, in negotiating the position of the Bonpo within the Tibetan refugee population?

Remaking Bon Identity: the relationship between the Bon Religion and Zhangzhung

Although the second generation of Bonpo in exile have always emphasised that Zhangzhung is the origin of their religion, it seems that the relationship between Zhangzhung and Bon has only recently been promoted in the Bonpo community, and in particular, narrated and understood by the Bonpo laity. Zhangzhung is the name of a kingdom which thrived in Western Tibet until the seventh and eighth centuries (Nishi & Nagano 2001; Karmay 1998; Kværne 2001; Rossi 1999). The Bonpo monastics in exile stress that Zhangzhung represents the 'golden age' of Bon in Tibetan societies before the introduction of Buddhism. However, there are few records left of the history of Zhangzhung, and researchers of Zhangzhung suggest

that the languages of Zhangzhung may have died out by the eleventh century (Nishi & Nagano 2001). For many decades researchers have tried to unravel the area, languages, and way of life of the people of Zhangzhung (see Bellezza 2005; Driem 2001; Honda 2009; Jacques 2009; Karmay 1998; Kværne 1972; Martin 2000; Nagano 2009; Nagano & Karmay 2008; Nishi & Nagano 2001; Ramble 1999; Rossi 1999; Takeuchi & Nishida 2009). Although the majority of these scholars relied heavily on archaeological evidence, some of them have studied literature from neighbouring areas, for example, Central and Eastern Tibet, China and India (Honda 2009; Jacques 2009; Kværne 1972; Nagano 2009; Takeuchi & Nishida 2009). However, until recently, the history of Zhangzhung, and the relationship between the culture of Zhangzhung and the Bon religion, have remained a subject for debate among Tibetan and non-Tibetan scholars. To date, the only point of consensus is that the kingdom of Zhangzhung covered the Western part of Tibet (including the whole Tsang region), and that its influence may have extended to areas of West Nepal and North India (Karmay 1998: 114-115; Nishi & Nagano 2001; Rossi 1999).

According to the Bon texts, Zhangzhung consisted of three parts: the Inner (*phug pa*), the Middle (*bar ba*), and the Outer (*sgo ba*) (Karmay 1998: 114), and the capital of the kingdom was located around Mt Kailash. The kingdom of Zhangzhung was said to include the whole of Western Tibet and part of Central Tibet to the east, North India (Ladakh, Kinnaur and Lahoul Spiti) and Western Nepal (Mustang) to the south, and Central Asia to the west and north (Driem 2001: 32; Karmay 1998: 114). The descriptions of Zhangzhung found in Bon texts are still being investigated by researchers, given that most Bon literature was written or 'rediscovered' in the tenth and eleventh centuries, or even later (Bjerken 2001; Karmay 1998; Snellgrove 1967). However, contemporary Bonpo monastics have adopted these textural descriptions to show evidence of Zhangzhung, and also to investigate the development of Bon during the Zhangzhung period (Kværne 1972; Ramble 1999).

As can be seen, Kinnaur in North India falls into the area which was described in the Bon texts as being influenced by Zhangzhung culture (see also Samuel 1993a; Stein 1972; Takeuchi & Nishida 2009). According to the monks in Menri monastery, before Zhangzhung was annexed by the Yarlung Dynasty, those people under the influence of Zhangzhung were adherents of the Bon religion, and they spoke the

Zhangzhung language (see also Kværne 1972).[44] After Zhangzhung was incorporated into the Yarlung Dynasty, the people of western Tibet became gradually assimilated into Buddhism, and the language of Zhangzhung was replaced by Tibetan. However, the Bonpo monks believe that those areas which were at the frontiers of the Yarlung Dynasty's control may still have preserved some of the customs of Zhangzhung, and their dialects may also have traces of Zhangzhung (Kværne 1972: 26). When the Bonpo monastics fled into exile, they embarked on research into the traces of Zhangzhung in the border areas of India, Nepal and Tibet. Therefore, Kinnaur became one of the target places where the Bonpo tried to 'discover' clues to their religious origin.[45] This brings us to the context in which Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche 'discovered' that the dance performed by the people of Kinnaur today corresponds to the Shon dance detailed in the Bon texts. Although it may not be surprising that Bonpo monastics have made an effort to investigate this performance in Kinnaur in order to demonstrate the relationship between Bon and Zhangzhung, the question of why Zhangzhung is so important to the Bonpo still remains.

The Bonpo believe that the kingdom of Zhangzhung is where the Bon religion developed before Buddhism became the dominant religion of Tibetans. According to Bon textural narratives, the first Tibetan version of Bon scripture was translated from the language of Zhangzhung (Driem 2001: 34; Karmay 1998; Nishi & Nagano 2001; Rossi 1999; see also *Tibetan Zan-Zun Dictionary*, published in 1965 by Tibetan Bonpo Foundation). Also, Bon texts represent the belief that Zhangzhung royalty were not only followers of Bon, but also the main patrons of the Bonpo masters. Although Zhangzhung may have had a rhetorical function in conjuring a nostalgic image of the 'golden age' of the Bon religion as depicted in Bon textual materials, I

[44] The term 'the Zhangzhung language' may need more careful examination. According to Donatella Rossi, the kingdom of Zhangzhung seems to have been divided into three provinces and the people spoke different languages (Rossi 1999: 18). As Rossi mentions, among these languages, one called *smar* (or *smrar*) was the language from which many Bonpo texts are said to have been translated into Tibetan. In recent research into Zhungzhung, Yoshio Nishi and Yasuhiko Nagano also point out that the Zhangzhung language, which is associated with the Bon religion by Bonpo believers today, was the language spoken by the *dMu* tribe in lower Zhangzhung (in the areas of Mt Kalish and Upper and Lower Mustang) (Nishi & Nagano 2001: 1-30; Driem 2001: 32). Nishi and Nagano argue that people of this tribe believed in Bon, which is why the Bon religion is considered to be related to Zhangzhung.

[45] The possible connection between Kinnaur and the language of Zhangzhung is briefly mentioned in R. A. Stein's *Tibetan Civilization* (1972) and Geoffrey Samuel's *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies* (1993a: 111). Yoshiharu Takahashi (2001) in a recent study of the Kinnauri language also suggests that the dialect of Kinnaur seems to possess some similarities to the Tibeto-Burman languages. However, as Samuel points out, research into Kinnaur and Spiti is still limited because the access to this area has been restricted to foreign researchers by the Indian Government.

suggest that it was not until the 1960s, when the Bonpo experienced being marginalised by Buddhists in the Tibetan refugee community, that they adopted Zhangzhung as an important source of validation for their position within the Tibetan nationality.

As already mentioned, contemporary Bon and Buddhism share a great number of similarities in terms of their practices and religious philosophies, and these similarities usually blur the distinction between Bon and Buddhism, and add confusion to the relationship between the two. As a result, in their early years of exile (the 1960s-1970s), the Bonpo faced the dilemma of attempting to position their religious identity. Some Buddhists in the Tibetan refugee community subordinated the Bon religion to Buddhism, arguing that it was a derivative and plagiaristic 'version' of Buddhism (Cech 1993: 40; Karmay 1998: 159; Kværne 1972: 23-24, 1985: 3). Some Buddhists excluded Bon completely from Buddhism, given that the Bonpo followed a different founder to Buddhism. Accordingly, the Bonpo monastic leadership were compelled to re-interpret the distinction between Bon and Buddhism, and locate the equal importance of Bon and Buddhism in Tibetan culture and history.

Buddhists in Tibetan societies had long established historical narratives linking the origin of Tibetan Buddhism ultimately to India (Banerjee 1981b; Bjerken 2001; Huber 2008). Buddhist historians depicted the introduction of Buddhism to Tibetan societies as a turning point which turned 'uncivilised' Tibetans into civilised ones (Bjerken 2001). The three kings of the Yarlung Dynasty, Songtsan Gampo (*srong btsan sgam po*), Trisong Detsen (*khri srong lde btsan*), and Ralpacan (*ral pa can*) were designated as being three Dharma Kings (*chos rgyal*) (or three Religion Kings, Mills 2003: 17) by Buddhists, given that they had played an important role in introducing and disseminating Buddhist teachings in Tibetan societies. The Bon textual narratives placed the origin of Bon in the west of Tibet, and maintained that it had flourished many centuries before the arrival of Buddhism (Dakpa 2005; Karmay 1972, 1998; Kværne 1972; Namdak 2006; Snellgrove 1967). Additionally, the kingdom of Zhangzhung was described as playing a key role in the development of the Bon religion. When the Bonpo fled into exile, these textual narratives on the origin of Bon and the relationship between Bon and Zhangzhung became significant historical reference points and evidence on which they could rely to claim their religious distinctiveness to Buddhism, and further, validating their religious position within Tibetan national identity.

Contemporary Bonpo monastics interpret Zhangzhung as representative of the Bon religion, and *vice versa*. According to them, Zhangzhung is of crucial significance, not only because it was associated with the history of Bon in pre-Buddhist Tibet, but most importantly, because it also represents a highly-developed literate culture which belongs to, and is shared, by all Tibetans. Given this importance, in the past decades of exile, the Bonpo monastics have tended to promote the significance of Zhangzhung in Tibetan history and culture by interpreting it as a 'lost tradition,' or a forgotten civilisation of Tibetans. It is argued that the Bonpo's negotiation of their religious identity in Tibetan nationalism has been largely framed by their efforts in making and remaking their religious connection to Zhangzhung. As emphasised by Bonpo monastics, the Bon religion is the only key to unravelling the mysterious history of Zhangzhung and the role Zhangzhung played in framing Tibetan culture, in addition to the influence of Buddhism.

Put quite simply, the Bonpo monastics in exile have tended to argue that, long before Buddhism arrived in Tibetan society, the Tibetans had developed into a highly-literate society, largely due to the powerful influence of the kingdom of Zhangzhung and the Bon religion in neighbouring areas. This helps to understand why Bonpo monastics felt that it was urgent and essential to unravel the existence of Zhangzhung by cross-examining their textual materials, recent archaeological research, and living evidence, for example, the Shon-like dance performed by the people of Kinnaur. If the Bonpo could find evidence to support the history of Zhangzhung in pre-Buddhist Tibet, and demonstrate that Bon had developed within, and contributed to, the culture of Zhangzhung, they could confidently locate the importance of Bon in Tibetan culture, history, and national identity. With this confidence, the Bonpo could therefore push ahead to negotiate their religious position in Tibetan nationalism. These contexts framed the majority of the Bonpo monastics' narratives on the relationship between Bon and Zhangzhung, and their research into the 'traditions' of Bon through Zhangzhung, and *vice versa*. The 'discovery' of the Shon dance is one of these examples. Although the relationship between the dance of Kinnaur and Shon in the Bon texts may still be argued and need further investigation, it has not affected the ways in which Bonpo monastics have emphasised their religious connection to Zhangzhung. For them, the 'discovery' of Shon in Kinnaur demonstrates two crucial points, which they have been struggling to negotiate with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Firstly, this ‘discovery’ proves that Bon texts contain historical ‘truths’ linked to the period before Buddhism was introduced into Tibetan society in the eighth century. As is well-known, most contemporary Bon texts are said to have been ‘rediscovered’ in the tenth and eleventh centuries, at which time Buddhism had spread across Tibetan society. Therefore, many Buddhist monastics and historians have criticised the Bon texts for plagiarising Buddhist texts. In this context, the ‘discovery’ of the Shon dance, which was exclusively mentioned in the Bon texts, and connected to the stories of Tonpa Shenrab in pre-Buddhist Tibet, means that Bon literature does contain authentic historical materials which are different from, and earlier than, Buddhist sources. Secondly, for the Bonpo monks, the correspondence between the dance of Kinnaur and Shon in the Bon texts demonstrates that the culture of current Kinnaur has a connection to the Bon religion. For them, this connection can only be built on their shared roots in the culture of Zhangzhung, given that Kinnaur had been influenced by Zhangzhung according to Bon texts. Therefore, the ‘discovery’ of Shon in Kinnaur proves what had been described in the Bon texts about the history of Zhangzhung, and also, the relationship between Bon and Zhangzhung. For the Bonpo, this ‘discovery’ is a big step forward in the negotiation of their religious history and their identity in terms of Tibetan nationalism. This is why the Bonpo leadership places a high value on the ‘Shon’ dance found in Kinnaur, and invites the people of Kinnaur to perform the dance annually in Dolanji.

Moreover, as already mentioned, the Cham festival has been promoted as a common public event in the areas surrounding Dolanji, and many Indian officials are invited to watch the performances on an annual basis. Given this, as many Bonpo monks have remarked, there is no better occasion than the Cham festival for the Bonpo to present their distinctive religious culture to the Indian public. This presentation, in my opinion, illustrates the Bonpo’s attempt to stress a close relationship between Tibetans and Indians via the culture of Bon and Zhangzhung. That is, instead of utilising Buddhism as a key connection, the Bonpo leadership argue that the Bon religion is the key to understanding the historical and cultural links shared by Indians and Tibetans. Thus, by depicting the Bon religion and Zhangzhung as representative of Tibetan culture in front of Indian district and, sometimes, state authorities, the Bonpo leadership are attempting to pressurise the Tibetan Government-in-Exile into reconsidering and recognising the importance of Bon identity in Tibetan nationalism. This may explain why the Kinnauri dance, a seemingly odd association, has been

consciously promoted, even though it appears to have no connection to the performance of Cham within the festival as a whole. However, if Zhangzhung is so important, and has been consciously employed by the Bonpo monastic leadership in seeking to reinstate their religious identity, why do many laity, in particular the older settlers, show no interest in this 'ancient tradition' of Bon?

Reactions of the Bonpo Audience

As noted, when the Shon performance began, most of the lay elders began to leave. Why? Did they not believe that this dance represents the 'lost tradition' of Bon and is therefore important? Passang, a lay man in his late twenties, explained to me that the elders, for example, his parents and grandparents, did not really know what the dance was about. This echoes what some elders told me when they said that it was simply a 'Kinnauri dance'. Passang's grandparents also remarked that they had never seen this dance in Tibet before, and therefore, they did not understand why they had to stay to watch it. At the same time, many of the elders stated that, unlike Shon, the Cham dances were very important. Passang explained, "*they [the elders] feel Cham is holy because there are many Bonpo protectors and deities in the performance, but they don't understand what Shon is*".

These remarks correspond to Schrempf's (1999) argument that Cham carries a ritual purpose for laity and monastic performers. The laity may have no idea of the dance movements and the specific order of the Cham dance. However, they see Cham as the performance of their religious protectors and deities. As Schrempf has put it, one of the purposes of Cham is to tame the negative forces of the living environment and re-establish the cosmic order of the world. This is what Bonpo lay elders expect from the Cham performance, and the reason they consider the Cham dances to be 'holy,' important, or in other words, sacred. Additionally, as Passang's grandparents mentioned, their purpose for participating in the event is to receive some kind of blessing (*byin rlabs*) from these protectors, such as to increase merit, health, and long life. These expectations of the older laity however, were certainly not applied to the recently-added Shon performance. For the elders, the dance performed by people of Kinnaur did not contain the same ritual purpose as Cham, and also, they were not 'familiar' with it. As they remarked, they had never seen it in Tibet before. These replies from the lay elders reflect the fact that, the importance of Zhangzhung to the

identity of Bon has only recently been developed in the narratives of Bonpo monastics in exile. Prior to exile, the knowledge of Zhangzhung, which was narrated in the Bon texts, was largely limited to monastics because of their ability to read and write (Cech 1987, 1993). At that time, most of the laity had little idea of Zhangzhung, and they seldom found it necessary to articulate a distinction between their religion and Buddhism. It was not until exile that the differences between Bon and Buddhism became an important matter with which the laity had to engage in their everyday lives in the refugee camps. However, I suggest that this awareness of religious distinctions has been played down and neglected when the Bonpo were re-located in Dolanji, where the settlers shared the same religious identity, and there was no need for them to articulate their religious belief in everyday life.

Compared to the elders, who saw Cham as a 'holy' performance, the younger laity, who were teenagers or in their twenties, seemed to view Cham as a form of entertainment rather than a sacred ceremony. Tsering, in his thirties, told me, "*I myself don't have any special feeling when watching Cham, but many young people are entertained by these dances*." Several girls, in their teenage years, remarked, "*The first time we saw these [Cham] dances, we were very excited, but having watched them every year, we feel very bored with them now*." It seems that, for the second and third generations, Cham is regarded as part of the celebrations for Tibetan New Year, in which entertainment is emphasised more than the religious aspect, and the performance itself is considered to be a social event rather than a religious ceremony.

However, although the younger laity may not know all the names of the protectors that appear in the Cham dance, they do understand that there are many Bonpo protectors and most of these protectors are females. When watching the Cham performance, many of them explained to me that Cham was about the stories of Sipa Gyalmo. In their words, she was a female deity and the 'highest' protector of Bon. As for the recently added 'Shon', unlike their elders, the younger laity (for example, Dechen, Sangmo, Passang, and Tsering) knew what the Shon dance was about, and why it is important to the Bonpo. For example, they all pointed out that this dance was related to the culture of Zhangzhung, and Zhangzhung had a close relationship with the Bon religion. This understanding of Shon and the relationship between Shon, Zhangzhung and Bon echoes the narratives emphasised by the Bonpo monastics. We

may ask, therefore, why the younger generations of Bonpo, who were born and grew up in exile, seem to have understood the importance of Zhangzhung, and the distinction between Bon and Buddhism, as articulated by the Bonpo leadership.

The different understandings and reactions expressed by the elders and the younger laity to Cham and Shon reflect the fact that the concepts associated with Bon identity may have changed over time in terms of the lived experiences in exile, and are approached differently in terms of different generations. For the elders, the Cham festival invoked their lived experience of religious belief prior to exile, and re-enhanced their sense of continuity which may have been interrupted and affected by the flight into exile. However, for the second generation, their awareness of their religious identity seemed to be invoked through the concept of Zhangzhung, which declared the distinctiveness of the Bon religion, and the importance of Bon to the Tibetan national identity. Unlike the first generation, the second generation have learned their religious beliefs in exile, where conflicts between Bon and Buddhism have arisen; the Bonpo had become marginalised by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and the Bonpo monastic leadership has emphasised a Bon identity distinctive from Buddhism. Therefore, compared to their elders, the second generation seemed to have become more aware of their religious distinctiveness in relation to Buddhism, particularly via the concept of Zhangzhung and its relationship to Bon. In this respect, I suggest that the newly added Shon dance may have become an important 'medium' (Pommaret 2006) which imparts the connection between Bon and Zhangzhung, an idea which has only recently become important to younger Bonpo in the formation of Bon identity. Apart from the performance of Shon, as will be explored in Chapters V and VI, the Bonpo monastics have also made an effort via various means to introduce a knowledge of Zhangzhung to the second and third generations, including through religious classes in the CST Dolanji, lectures at the annual summer workshop (Droling, *bgro gling*), and via museum, library, and magazines.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that claims in respect of identity are usually manifested through the process of remaking traditions, and the reinvention of traditions is often aimed at negotiating and articulating the legitimacy of a particular identity. In this

chapter, I have argued that the claim of a distinctive Bon identity has been closely associated with movements promoting 'the Bon traditions,' which consciously emphasise a connection between Bon and the history and culture of Zhangzhung. By stressing that Zhangzhung represents a historical and cultural heritage shared by Tibetans and the Bon religion alike, and in seeking to preserve 'traditions' inherited from Zhangzhung, Bonpo monastics are asserting the importance of Bon traditions in contributing to a distinctive Tibetan national identity. In this process of re-structuring the discourse of distinctiveness, Bon literature is drawn upon as compelling authority, and ritual practices and performances have become an important means of displaying and reaffirming the authenticity of Bon textual knowledge. This echoes Gladney's (1998a: 5) argument that narratives of tradition are associated with claims to privileged knowledge, and ritual performances are often adopted to reaffirm the authenticity of the claims.

In respect of the Bonpo in exile, it is argued that the claims made in relation to tradition involve a group of elites, who have an in-depth knowledge of historical literature and the ability to recreate meanings through texts, thereby transposed into the medium of culture, and who, above all, have a position of influence in the community (Hobsbawm 1983; Vlastos 1998). For both Bon and Buddhist laities, their religious clerics have always been the authoritative and trusted representatives of their religious scriptures and practices (Hess 2009; Mills 2003). The high esteem in which monastics are held by the laity has given the Bon and Buddhist monastic communities an unquestionable leadership in political, historical and social spheres. As the findings of this chapter have indicated, Bonpo monastics have played a leading role in interpreting the concepts of culture and history, and dominated the way in which traditions are presented and how they link to the expression of the Bon identity, as well as Tibetan national identity.

Plate 6. Sipa Gyalmo and her emanations in the Cham Dance (2007)

Plate 7. The Indian audience of the Cham Festival (2008)

Plate 8. The Shon Dance by people from Kinnaur (2008)

Plate 9. The performance of Shon

Chapter III.

Annual Commemorations and Celebrations: Tibetan National Identity in Dolanji

> *"... when recollection has been treated as a cultural rather than as an individual activity, it has tended to be seen as the recollection of a cultural tradition; and such a tradition, in turn, has tended to be thought of as something that is inscribed" (Connerton 1989: 4).*

This chapter shifts the focus from religious ceremonies to secular commemorations and celebrations in Dolanji, and from the role played by monastics to the lives lived by lay settlers. The previous chapter focused on the Cham festival in order to understand the role played by the Bonpo monks in (re)constructing knowledge of Bon identity, and in determining how the Bonpo should be positioned within the discourse of Tibetan national identity. However, communication involves dialogue between two sides, and, as pointed out, the Bonpo leadership's discourse on tradition has been deliberately aimed at the national discourse as articulated by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. In view of this, I cannot help but wonder whether or not the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has also found a way of imparting its own particular take on what constitutes Tibetan national identity, to the residents of Dolanji; and how the Bonpo are made aware of communications by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Aside from religious ceremonies (see Appendix A), such as celebrations of the birthday of the first Menri abbot and Tonpa Shenrab, and the Cham festival, which are held by Menri monastery, other collective activities are organised by the settlement office in Dolanji. These include the annual commemorations of the Tibetan (Lhasa) Uprising Day on the 10th March, the Dolanji Foundation Day on the 28th May, and the celebration of the birthday of the fourteenth Dalai Lama on the 6th July. In addition to these regular ceremonies, there are other occasional events which are held when the settlement office receives directives from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. For example, a function was held by the settlement office on the 18th October 2007 to celebrate the Gold Medal Prize being awarded to the Dalai Lama; and in April 2008, the settlement office organised a peace march in Solan, in

which both lay settlers and monastics participated to protest against China's violent crackdown on Tibetans in March 2008. These community gatherings, which are directed by the settlement office under the supervision of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, reflect the important role played by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in daily life in Dolanji.

This chapter therefore, aims to understand the national discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in terms of national commemorations and celebrations held in Dolanji. It addresses the question of how these ceremonies are designed by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in order to convey its national discourse and policies, and how the Bonpo, by participating in these ceremonies, articulate their religious and national identities. Furthermore, the question is asked as to whether different generations access and interpret the significance of these ceremonies differently, and if so, why?

Connerton in his work, *How Societies Remember* (1989), proposes that commemorative ceremonies represent and, by a repetitive performance, re-enforce what a society intends to remember and aims to forget. As he has put it, through bodily practices, the narratives conveyed by the ceremonies about past events are transformed into a habitual social experience, which links the participants to what they are performing and reaffirms the legitimacy of the present social order. Therefore, the commemorations play an important role in imparting to the public how histories should be portrayed. The ceremonies on which this chapter focuses are mostly framed to commemorate certain historical events. This brings us to ask: why these particular events? What meaning and themes are narrated by these ceremonies, and why are they important to the dominant social and political forces responsible for directing the ways in which they are commemorated and celebrated? How do the participants perceive and interpret the significance of these annual ceremonies? Moreover, do the meanings associated with these commemorations and celebrations change over time, and if they do, why?

Dolanji Foundation Day: Communicating Identities

Before moving on to national ceremonies, it is important to examine the particular characteristics of the Dolanji Foundation Day commemoration, and the changes

reflected over the past decades. These characteristics are of significance because they are also shared by the national ceremonies held in Dolanji, and the changes which have occurred also apply to the contexts in which the national commemorations and celebrations are situated. Moreover, given that Dolanji Foundation Day is an event which is particular to Dolanji, which commemorates the foundation of the settlement in 1967, I think an examination of this commemoration would allow us to identify the interplay of different identities, including religious, regional and national identities, in the life experience of settlers. As discussed in Chapter II, Dolanji was established as a result of, and in resistance to, the marginalisation of the Bonpo by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Given this, one may expect that the Dolanji Foundation Day is intended to exclusively commemorate the struggles of the Bonpo, consciously promoting Bon identity over regional and national identities. However, as the findings suggest, apart from focusing on the Bon identity, this commemoration has also opened up a space for the settlers to express their regional diversity, and it also aims to link the settlers to the wider context of the Tibetan diaspora, and emphasise the connections between the Bonpo and other Tibetan refugees.

In 2007, the commemoration of Dolanji Foundation Day began at 9 a.m., when the settlers, students and teachers of the CST Dolanji, and the monks gathered in the school playground. The students were dressed in their school uniform, and adult laity dressed in their traditional clothes, which differed slightly in style depending on their regional origins. The ceremony began with a *bsang gsol* ritual (ritual of purification), which was followed by a Bon prayer. This prayer, performed in order to publicly promote the teachings of Bon, was chanted by the monks, Bonpo settlers, and the students (Plate 10). The school faculty, which included Indians and Buddhist Tibetans, did not join in the chanting. The teachers, who belonged to different Buddhist denominations, told me that they did not know this prayer because they were not Bonpos. They said they were only familiar with Buddhist prayers. The remarks made by the Buddhist teachers imply, in my opinion, that that the chanting of the Bon prayer created a significant boundary between Bonpo and non-Bonpo, echoing the sentiment expressed earlier, that they felt like ‘outsiders’ in Dolanji because they were not Bonpo (see Chapter I).

Unlike the religious ceremonies held in the monastery, in which the monks always stayed in the centre ground and were surrounded by the laity, most of the

commemoration ceremonies and celebrations held in the school playground have the students lining up in the centre position, with the lay adults standing or sitting around and the monks gathered in one corner. On Dolanji Foundation Day in 2007, the settlement officer and secretary, the school Principal, and the representative from Menri monastery were placed in the host seats. Next to the host seats, there was a table on which the photographs of the Abbot and Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche were placed, with butter lamps and water offerings in front. After the students sang the Tibetan and Indian national anthems, participants offered silk scarves in front of the photographs, and the speeches began. The speeches made by the settlement officer and the monastery representative briefly recalled the events of the flight into exile, arrival in exile, the foundation of the settlement, and moved on to a review of the improvements in the school, the settlement and the monastery over the past decades. Rinchen, the settlement officer, explained to me that his speech had focused primarily on education. As he said,

> "*I told the students to study hard. I said to them that many elders had passed away, and the population in Dolanji is decreasing. So, they are the future of Dolanji. If they become educated, whatever they do will contribute simultaneously to this settlement, the Bonpo, and Tibetans as a whole too*".

He admitted that in his speech, he did not focus on the struggles of the Bonpo in the 1960s, but talked more on the difficulties of life in exile among Tibetans in general. According to Rinchen, the early struggles of the Bonpo did not really matter now, because the status of the Bonpo had been significantly improved. As he said, "*I don't want to cause unnecessary problems with Dharamsala. That would not help the development of the settlement"*. The Indian principal of the school, who spoke in English, remarked on the achievements of school students in the past year, and expressed his admiration for the Dalai Lama and the efforts made by him for international peace and Tibetan nationals. He also thanked the Bonpo leadership for their efforts toward school education and the improvement of neighbouring areas.

Between the speeches, the students performed Tibetan dances, songs and comedies. The monks and lay adults sat around to watch the performances. They laughed, clapped or cheered at various points, particularly for those students with beautiful singing voices. After a girl and boy sang a duet, the crowd cheered particularly

loudly, making the singers blush. Some monks took pictures of the performances with their mobile phones. Lay adults, especially the older women, whispered to each other about how good or how funny certain students' performances were. One of the duets is called "We Will Go Back to Tibet" (*nga tsho tshang ma bod la log 'gro*). This duet is performed by students in almost every collective event, such as the Dolanji Foundation Day and the Dalai Lama's Birthday. This song was performed with a big Tibetan national flag waving beside the singers (Plate 11). When watching the singing, some girls sitting beside me explained that this was a 'sad' song because it talked about how beautiful Tibet was, and expressed the hope of returning one day to Tibet. These students have learnt histories of the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet in their school classes. They also learnt to draw the map of Tibet and identify its neighbouring countries. However, none of them have lived in Tibet. Therefore, I could not help but wonder how these students interpreted the meanings in the song, and what image of 'Tibet' they had in their minds?

Lumo, in Year 7, often talked about her ambition to become an architect. Dechen, who was one year senior to Lumo, hoped to go to the United States to study English literature and become a journalist. However, what of Tibet? Is visiting or 'returning' to Tibet part of their future plans, as imparted in the song? Lumo told me, "*I've never been to Tibet in my life, and I don't want to go when the Chinese are still there. Chinese people killed many of our Tibetans. They treated us very badly*". Dechen added,

> "*Do you know how bad Chinese people are? They put our Panchen Lama in prison. Many years ago the newspaper showed a photo of the real Panchen Lama in the prison. He was kidnapped by Chinese when he was six years old. And after that we never saw him in public. We don't know where he is now*".

Did this mean that they would not consider going back to Tibet? In reply to my question, Lumo was emphatic, "*We will follow the Dalai Lama's decision. If he says we should go back, we will*". Lumo and Dechen's remarks indicate that, although the younger generation have never lived in Tibet, they have learnt about 'Tibet', what it was like and how it is now, from various media, including their school textbooks, the official statements of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and the newspapers. Moreover, it is from these media that students learn about 'Tibet' as a 'national'

cause rather than a personal issue. As reflected in Lumo and Dechen's statements, Tibet's past and the 'sufferings' of Tibetans in the present, are described in terms of 'we', 'our' and 'us'. In addition, though, these young people have their own ambitions to become architects, journalists, or teachers, and their own opinions about whether they wanted to 'return' to Tibet or not. However, it is also clear that the issue of Tibet should, in their opinion, be decided by the Dalai Lama, the head of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. These notions of 'Tibet', which are reflected in the remarks made by Lumo and Dechen, will be examined later in comparison with remarks made by first generation settlers in respect of national day commemorations.

The commemoration ceremony finished after the student performances. After lunch, a few games were organised by the settlement office. However, many people left at lunch time. In the ceremony, I ran into Kunga, a layman in his thirties. When watching the student performances, Kunga remembered the celebration 20 years ago, at the time he was also a student at the CST Dolanji. As he recalled,

> *"When I was studying in the school, people took more interest in celebrating Dolanji Foundation Day. At that time, people wore new dresses and jewellery, and they also brought their lunch and butter tea for picnics. We offered kha btags [scarves] to the Dalai Lama's photos at that time, to express our respect for him. […]*
>
> *There were speeches as we have now. The same kind of people attended, such as settlement officers and the representatives of the monastery. At that time they talked more about how they had left Tibet and the organisation of the settlement. […]*
>
> *After sunset, the old people would dance their local dances. People were divided into groups and danced for about an hour. Nowadays we don't do this because no-one takes an interest in these dances. Now people feel that celebrating this day is a duty rather than a pleasure. In the old days people enjoyed dancing together on days like this."*

With a master's degree in business from the Panjab University in Chandigarh, Kunga was now running a guesthouse in the Tibetan settlement in Delhi. This guesthouse has become the place where the Bonpo monks and their foreign guests prefer to stay during their visits in Delhi. A few young men (in their twenties) from Dolanji were

employed by Kunga to help with the running of the guesthouse. Some monks have joked to me that Kunga's guesthouse has become 'a news centre,' where Bonpos travelling around India and other countries exchange their news with each other. When the guesthouse was not busy, Kunga sometimes returned to Dolanji to visit his families and old friends. This was why he attended the Dolanji Foundation Day ceremony in 2007.

Kunga's remarks suggest that, apart from religious and national identities, a concern for regional identities, as reflected in the performance of regional dances, had been a significant part of the commemoration ceremony 20 years ago. When I asked the elders why they did not perform their regional dances any more, many of them told me that they were getting too old now, and that the young people had no interest in learning or performing the dances. The decreasing interest shown in regional dances by the younger generation may imply that the interest in regional identities has changed over the generations. In contrast to a declining interest in regional identities, we find that the interest in Tibetan national identity, as represented in the performances of students and in speeches which emphasised a shared experience of exile, as well as the leadership of the Dalai Lama, seemed to be an important focus both in the commemorations of 20 years ago and in 2007. As reflected in Rinchen's remarks when recalling the establishment of the settlement, he consciously emphasised the refugee experience and the context of exile, which were shared by the Bonpo and other Tibetan refugees, and played down the struggles of the Bonpo. This causes us to reflect on whether the intention behind this event was to build a connection between Dolanji and other Tibetan settlements, and invoke a sense of sameness between the Bonpo and other Tibetans. However, why is it important to emphasise the Tibetan national identity in the Dolanji Foundation Day commemorations?

Gyatso, the eldest brother of Lumo, told me,

> "*We never think to separate the Bonpo from other Tibetans. On the issue of Tibet we always stand on the same side as the others. Only on the issue of religion do we Bonpos have a little disagreement with Buddhists. But remember, we are Tibetans first, and then Bonpo*".

Gyatso, a monk in his early forties, had taught Bon philosophy for about ten years at

the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS), near Varanasi. As discussed in Chapters I and II, Dolanji was established to emphasise the distinctive religious identity shared by the settlers. However, as Gyatso's remark has illustrated, the emphasis of this religious identity has never been separated from the context of the Tibetan diaspora. Rather, the Bonpo have been negotiating to have their religious identity recognised directly within the centre ground of Tibetan national identity. This can also be seen in the discourse on 'Bon traditions' which has been consciously promoted by the Bonpo monastics. For the Bonpo leadership, the content and significance of 'the Bon traditions' are worthy of note only when they are situated and understood from within the context of Tibetan nationalism, and presented as being a pillar of the Tibetan national identity. This echoes Gyatso's concern that the issue of Bon should take its place within the greater Tibetan identity. Given this, I suggest that the Dolanji Foundation Day, which links both to Bon identity and to the general experience of the Tibetan diaspora, may have been adopted by the Bonpo in order to demonstrate their awareness of the importance of national identity, over and above their religious identity, for the benefit of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and other Tibetan refugees.

Moreover, I suggest that this commemoration also offers the Bonpo leadership an alternate space in which they can manipulate the relationship between these two identities in order to adjust to immediate social needs. As reflected in Kunga's recollections, in the 1980s, the commemoration was particularly aimed toward expressing the settlers' respect and devotion to the Dalai Lama. This was evident in the display of the Dalai Lama's photograph and the offerings made from the settlers to him. This focus on the Dalai Lama illustrates that in the 1980s, just a decade after Dolanji was recognised by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, there was still an urgent need for the Bonpo to declare their participation in the Tibetan community in exile, and to stress their agreement with the leadership of the Dalai Lama. The urgency of this need may have declined in 2007-2008, given that the photograph was changed to represent the Bonpo leadership, including the Abbot, and Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, both of whom had played an important role in the foundation of the settlement. This change reflects that although the Bonpo intend to place Tibetan identity over their religious identity, the weight that they accord to these two identities has changed over the decades in accordance with the situation of the Bonpo in the Tibetan community in exile.

Events as Forms of Narration and Performative Ritual

When we consider the significance of Dolanji Foundation Day for the Bonpo, it is notable that the annual ceremony is informed by a number of different factors, which are subject to negotiation in order to determine what should be remembered and what is most important at the time. By telling and retelling key themes and key historical narratives, for example, the stories of flight, struggles in exile, and the leadership of Dalai Lama and the Bon religion, the celebration intends to instil in participants a habitual experience of both the past and the present social order. Through bodily practices, such as the offerings, the speeches, and performances of dancing and singing, the participants are transformed into the narrators, who utilise their lived experience in order to understand and interpret the commemorations, while at the same time applying the ideas embodied in the ceremony to frame their own social experience. Therefore, I suggest that the annual ceremony should be examined as being both a display of narratives, and a ritual performance. I argue that these annual commemorations and celebrations not only provide the participants with language in which to communicate, but they also contain a ritual purpose, which seeks to negotiate the relationship between individuals and communities, minorities and majorities, different generations, and social changes.

In the commemoration of the Dolanji Foundation Day, it is notable that while the form of the ceremony has remained largely unchanged over the decades, the meanings it represents and the audiences it addresses have changed to some degree. In the national ceremonies on which the following sections will focus, we will also find that certain themes are constantly narrated and emphasised, but some are gradually played down over the decades in order to fulfil the new needs emerging from current social circumstances. It will be argued that the connections between the annual ceremonies and social change, and between the participants and wider society, are of critical significance. Because of these connections, the annual ceremonies offer an important point of access from which to understand the dialogues and negotiations between different political and social forces which seek to exercise their power in order to influence and control what society should remember. Moreover, the repetition of commemorations and celebrations provides us with a vantage point from which to understand how a society copes with social changes, communicates with different ‘others’, and above all, negotiates the conflicts and contradictions embedded in social relationships.

In anthropology, cyclic ceremonies have been approached from a variety of perspectives. For example, Sahlins (1981, 1995) focuses on recurrent ceremonies in Hawaii to understand how a cultural structure is reproduced and transformed over the long-term. He argues that the recurrence of ceremonies is supported by a dialectical relationship between history and culture. Whilst culture provides a framework to explain events and social change, it is also constantly modified and transformed by social change, which, by supplying new elements and new relationships, may break and change the structure of a culture. Unlike Sahlins, who uses the repetition of ceremonies to investigate the relationship between culture and history, Ramble's ethnography emphasises the importance of annual ceremonies in maintaining a sense of community. In his research into the ceremony used to appoint a headman in Te (upper Kali Gandaki region, Nepal), Ramble (1993) found that this ceremony was designed to be a game of chance. In this ceremony, in which the whole village participated as game players, the head man was decided by chance through a prolonged and complex process of selection. According to Ramble, by transforming the ceremony into a game of chance, the selection of the head man avoided the involvement of personal manipulation, and, by presenting the result as 'the unanimous decision' of the whole community, the ceremony functioned to reinforce the membership and the unity of the community. From a similar perspective to Ramble, Karmay (1998), when examining the mountain cult in a village in Amdo, also discusses how this recurrent ceremony helps to re-create and re-define the boundaries of the local community.

However, it should be noted that, when focusing on the local historical and social contexts in order to unravel the significance of cyclic ceremonies, these researchers seem to downplay the influence of the state and the broader contexts of national and international discourses in framing the way people live their lives, as well as the way they understand and interpret the importance of ceremonies. As I shall be arguing, annual commemorations and celebrations are significant not only because they selectively represent and articulate important historical and social experiences from the local perspective, but also because they provide an arena which allows the community to constantly adjust its relationship with 'others' in the wider context of the state, national and transnational discourses. Jonsson (2001), in a study on school sports competitions in a Mien village in Thailand, argues for the importance of state power in framing the way the event is presented. As he has put it, the rules of play

and rewards in sport competitions not only reflect the influence of the state on various aspects of the participants' daily activities, but they also influence the way the Mien population negotiates their minority and national identities in competition with other minority groups. Jonsson maintains that these school sports competitions not only reproduce social realities in terms of local and national relations; they also represent an attempt to negotiate and redefine these relationships. This brings us to the ritual characteristics of the annual ceremony, and its role in reflecting and resolving social conflicts and contradictions.

As Ortner's research into Sherpa society (1978) suggests, rituals usually reflect the struggles confronted by the community in daily life, and aim to arrive at certain 'solutions' (1978: 2-3). Applying this characteristic of ritual to examining the national ceremonies held in Dolanji, we find that these annual commemorations and celebrations not only represent, but also intend to resolve, the conflicts emerging in the Tibetan community in exile and its discourse on national identity. Throughout the performances associated with the ceremonies, the contradictions the participants experience in their daily life are offered a new explanatory perspective and endowed with new versions of narratives. As reflected in the commemoration of the Dolanji Foundation Day, the themes narrated and emphasised by the ceremony may change in accordance with the changes in social circumstance and the emergence of new needs on the part of the participants. However, the role played by the annual ceremonies, namely, to negotiate identities and contradictions, continues. For example, today's Bonpo settlers may find that the Dolanji Foundation Day ceremony holds no important meaning for them. However, the commemoration continues to be held annually and the settlers participate. While the ceremony remains, it continues to narrate and generate a sense of community among the people who participate.

Tibetan National Ceremonies in Dolanji

Since they received official recognition from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in 1977, the influence of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has been formally and directly channelled into the lives of the Bonpo settlers through the election of a settlement representative (Chapter I), the settlement affairs, the school educational programme (Chapter V), and, as will be examined, the annual ceremonies performed on national holidays. In terms of the directives of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile,

all of the Tibetan settlements are obliged to celebrate and commemorate the national days established by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), and a statement made by the Cabinet (Kashag) of the CTA features as part of the ceremony. Given the fact that ceremonies on national holidays are under the supervision of the CTA, they become important occasions on which the national discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile can be observed. Moreover, in the context of Dolanji, these national ceremonies also provide the Bonpo with important occasions on which to represent their participation in the national movements and to negotiate the recognition of their religious and national identities in the Tibetan community in exile. As discussed by Connerton (1989), recurrent ceremonies are significant because of their repetition and formalisation. By repeatedly emphasising the 'standard versions' of national pasts along with a formalised physical performance, the annual ceremonies enact the continuity of the past in the present. By examining the themes the Tibetan national ceremonies narrate and the changes which have occurred, this section seeks to understand how the Bonpo perceive national identity in relation to different aspects of their daily life in Dolanji.

Tibetan (Lhasa) Uprising Day

Tibetan Uprising Day is regarded as an important national holiday by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. This holiday commemorates the uprising of the Tibetans in Lhasa against the Chinese in 1959. The event is also called Lhasa Uprising Day. On the 10th March 1959, thousands of Tibetans in Lhasa gathered around the palace of the Dalai Lama, begging him not to leave the palace to meet the Chinese leadership alone (Dalai Lama 1962). This gathering turned into an uprising against Chinese power. On the 17th March 1959, the fourteenth Dalai Lama fled into exile, just before the Chinese troops invaded Lhasa to carry out a 'forced liberation'. Since the establishment of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the 10th March has been set to commemorate the uprisings in Lhasa and the subsequent uprisings and struggles of Tibetans against the Chinese occupation. It is also called the Tibetan National Uprising Day. From 1961 onwards, every year on Tibetan Uprising Day both the Dalai Lama and the CTA would broadcast statements to the whole Tibetan population and a commemoration ceremony would be held in every Tibetan settlement across the world.

In Dolanji in 2007-2008, the commemoration of Tibetan Uprising Day began at 8 a.m. Only the lay settlers participated in the ceremony. As will be discussed, this represented a difference from how the ceremony was performed in the 1980s, at which time the monks from Menri monastery were also present for the commemoration. The ceremony began with a ritual of purification, which was followed by a statement from the CTA, announced by the settlement representative. In the statements (see Appendix B), the CTA stressed that Tibetans inside and outside Tibet were responsible for preserving Tibetan culture, religions and Tibetan identity. The statements criticised the Chinese Government for its repression of Tibetan religions and language, and its intention to assimilate Tibetans into the Chinese population, culturally and racially. The CTA re-emphasised the leadership of the Dalai Lama, and affirmed that the Government-in-Exile and all Tibetans would follow the Dalai Lama's middle-way when negotiating the issue of Tibet with China. After this announcement, the ceremony ended. The entire process lasted about 40 minutes.

In the village, several households raised the Tibetan national flags above their houses. Paljor, a lay man in his forties who arrived in the school playground 10 minutes after the ceremony began (in 2007), told me,

> *"I almost forgot today is March 10. I remembered it when I saw the national flags waving on people's houses. These days we don't treat this day as important as we used to. When I was young, every March 10 we all gathered in the school, sang the Tibetan national anthem and burned the Chinese flag. But now we don't do this. You see, now even the Dalai Lama doesn't insist on our independence."*

The changes Paljor remarked on were also identified by other settlers. For example, Nyimtso, in her late thirties, recalled that, decades ago (which can be probably dated to the 1970s-1980s), not only the lay settlers, but the monks and the students and faulty of the CST Dolanji all participated in this ceremony. According to her, the ceremony used to last longer, the speeches in particular were long, and every settler was obligated to attend the ceremony. Moreover, she recalled that when she was little, lay adults used to burn images of Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese Government in the 1950s-1970s. Nyimtso's parents raised a Tibetan national flag on the roof of their house after the ceremony. In replying to my question on how they

felt about the change in ceremony nowadays, Nyimtso' parents recalled that in the past, the performances in the ceremony were very 'aggressive'. According to them, in addition to burning the Chinese flag and images of the Chinese leader, people would also show visible anger towards the Chinese people, spitting on anything representative of the Chinese government.

However, it seems that the way in which this commemoration is held has changed, and that this change may only have occurred within the last two decades. When Cech (1987) attended the same ceremony in Dolanji in 1983, the procedure for the commemoration was still similar to what was recalled by Paljor, Nyimtso and Nyimtso's parents. As Cech has detailed, in the commemoration ceremony in 1983, people burnt a cardboard effigy of Mao Zedong. Following this, the settlement representative read out a statement from the CTA, and the representatives from Menri monastery and the school also gave short speeches, in which participants were reminded of China's takeover of Tibet, Chinese violence toward Tibetans, and Tibetans' continuous resistance to the Chinese. The speeches also expressed the hope that one day Tibet would be free and the Tibetans in exile would be able to return home. In addition, the students from the school presented their drawings which depicted scenes of Tibetans fighting against the Chinese (Cech 1987).

Comparing the ceremonies in 2007-2008 with what settlers recalled in the 1960s-1980s and with what Cech described in 1983, it seems that many details of the ceremony have changed. Nyimtso's parents explained that they had stopped doing 'aggressive' performances in the ceremony because "*the Dalai Lama told us not to*". According to them, in recent years the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile have repeatedly emphasised in their statements that Tibet's situation should not be solved by violent means, but rather, through dialogue between the two sides, on a non-violent and peaceful basis. Nyimtso added that the settlement office had changed the ceremony because the CTA now adopted the middle-way approach as its national policy, which, according to her, was aimed at making peace between Tibetans and the Chinese Government, and thereby, sought to discourage any behaviour which might create anger between the two sides. Can we say for sure that there is a definite connection between the commemoration of Tibetan Uprising Day and the national policy of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile? If so, how does the change in the national policy affect the commemoration ceremony in the context of

Dolanji? Before moving on to a discussion of the changes, I think it is important to examine how the Tibetan Uprising Day ceremony was performed in the 1960s-1980s, as recalled by those settlers aged 30 and above.

Narrative Themes up to the 1980s: Invasion, Resistance, Flight, and Exile

Rinchen's grandfather, Lungtok, was almost 70. He came to Dolanji with his nephew, Rinchen's father, in 1967. Lungtok remembered that about 20-30 years ago when they held the commemoration for the Tibetan Uprising Day, the speeches usually recalled the stories of how the Dalai Lama left Tibet, how the Tibetans fought with Chinese troops, and the difficulties they had faced as they fled to India. Echoing what was remarked by Nyimtso's parents, Lungtok also mentioned that in the early years of exile, the ceremony for the Tibetan Uprising Day was intended to evoke a sense of anger among participants, toward the Chinese, usually manifested by spiting and shouting at images of Mao Zedong, stepping on the Chinese flag, and burning them both. Rinchen remembered that when he was little, the speeches in the commemoration ceremony usually ended by stating that "*Tibetans will reclaim the independence of Tibet and return to Tibet soon*".

The recollections of the settlers, and Cech's ethnography, show certain themes centred on the Tibetan Uprising Day commemorations in the 1960s-1980s: the Chinese invasion of Tibet, the resistance of Tibetans inside and outside Tibet, the flight into exile, and the hope of returning to an independent Tibet. These themes were not only emphasised in the speeches, but were also dramatically enacted in the performances of participants. When we consider the statements represented in the annual ceremony, it is evident that the past was being structured and interpreted in terms of the themes of invasion, resistance and flight, to evoke a strong sense of collective suffering to be shared by all Tibetans in the present. Moreover, it can be seen that the speeches depicted the future independence of Tibet as if it was approaching, and that it would be the result of the struggles and sufferings experienced in their refugee life. These rhetoric emphases were then reproduced and affirmed by bodily practices, including the drawing of battles between Tibetans and the Chinese by students, and the act of burning the Chinese flag and the effigy of the Chinese leader who had ordered the invasion of Tibet.

By performing a symbolic defeat of Chinese national authority, the ceremony acted out a symbolic past and future in the present, and the participants were transformed into narrators representing what the ceremony was meant to enact. It can be seen that although the participants may not all have the same experience of the invasion, resistance, flight and exile, the formalised procedure of the ceremony reminded the participants that their individual experiences were all located in the same contexts, which they shared together and by which they were bonded together. Also, it should be noted that most of the students were born in exile. This means that they had never experienced the invasion, resistance and flight, which the ceremony was intended to represent. However, through their performances, not only the elders but also the young generations were connected to what had happened, which generated a sense of social and cultural continuity among the participants from different generations.

In her study of the Hutu refugees in Tanzania, Malkki (1995a) also observes how histories are selectively remade in order to define the relationship between past and present. By examining the discourse of a mythico-history recounted by the Hutu refugees in the camp, Malkki finds that the needs of the present are built into the narration of the past, and the past is transformed to explain life at the moment and to structure social action in the present (cf. 1995a: 105). The way the Hutu camp refugees dealt with histories can also be observed in the way the Tibetan Uprising Day ceremony in Dolanji commemorated what had happened. As noted, the ceremony in the 1960s-1980s had intended to recount why and how the Tibetans had become refugees. In so doing, the ceremony illustrated to the participants what to hope for (namely, to regain an independent Tibet as it was prior to the invasion of China), and emphasised the importance of staying united in the present.

Moreover, it is important to note that the Tibetan Uprising Day ceremony was performed throughout all the Tibetan settlements across the world. This means that the participants were not only connected to the settlers in the same settlement, but at the same time, to those in other Tibetan settlements. As Anderson (1991) puts it, the existence of a nation is redefined and reconfirmed when a sense of solidarity is generated through the idea that people of the same community share the same sentiments, the same values, and the same lived experience. If this is the way in which the nation re-affirms its existence, it explains why the commemoration of Tibetan Uprising Day, in which all the Tibetan exiles were obligated to take part,

became an important occasion on which the Tibetan Government-in-Exile repeatedly emphasised the meaning of belonging to a national community. However, what remains in question is the extent to which the idea of Tibetan nationhood had meaning for participants beyond the ceremony itself. Did the ceremony function as a reminder to revivify settlers' sentiments toward a Tibetan nation? Or did it serve to create a national cause for the settlers and frame their lived experience of exile into a form of national expression? Moreover, were the meanings attributed by the participants in the ceremony in Dolanji different to those expressed by Tibetans in other settlements?

Creating a National Identity among Diverse Regional and Religious Identities

As noted in previous chapters, for most of the first generation of Tibetan refugees, the notion of a Tibetan nation was a newly-introduced concept, which has only recently been emphasised as a result of, and in response to, the confrontation between Tibetans and the Chinese in the 1950s, and their subsequent flight into exile. In the decades leading to 1959, the lay population (both Bon and Buddhist) usually used regional identities on an individual basis, and the monks sometimes used their religious denominations as a means to distinguish between themselves (Cech 1987, 1993; Houston & Wright 2003; Lopez 1998: 197; Norwak 1984; Samuel 1982, 1993a; Stoddard 1994; Thargyal 2001). Even in the first two to three decades of exile (the 1960s-1980s), for most of the Tibetan refugees, regional identities still served as the main device through which they built their social networks and organised their daily social activities. This can be observed from the fact that most Tibetan refugee settlements were established in terms of the settlers' place of origin. In Dolanji, although the settlement was founded upon a shared religious identity, the layout of houses reflects that regional identities were important when the first generation relocated to Dolanji. Also, as discussed in Chapter I, settlers from the same region organised their own groups, which held regional gatherings alongside the settlement activities.

In my conversations with the elders in Dolanji, they seldom described themselves as Tibetan (*bod pa*). Rather, they usually referred to themselves as Kham-pa (people from Kham) or Amdo-wa (people from Amdo). For example, when I first met Wangyal, a 79 year old layman, he introduced himself by saying, "*You know Dawa,*

right? I am from the same place as her father. We both are Khams-pa". Apart from the regions, the elders often referred to their villages of origin to explain their identity and their relationship with each other. For example, they would introduce their friends to me by saying "*We are both from Songpan (a place in Amdo)*", or, "*Our villages are very close to each other*". Compared to their identification with their villages and regions of origin, the notion of being a Tibetan (*bod pa*) was only mentioned when these elders recalled how the Chinese had invaded their villages, how they had fled across the borders to Nepal and India, and how different life was in exile compared to life in Tibet before the Chinese took over their villages. For example, when Lungtok recalled how he had escaped with his brother and some neighbours from Kham to the Tibet-Nepal border and how they had fought with the Chinese troops, he often referred to his group as 'Tibetans' (*bod pa*) in contrast to the Chinese (*rgya mi*). However, when he talked to me about his life in his home village, he invariably referred to "*Our Kham-pa…*".

It is interesting to note that the older generation's recollection of flight and exile, to a certain extent, parallels the narrative themes evident in the official statements of the CTA in the Tibetan Uprising Day ceremony. This raises the question of whether the commemoration and celebration of national days has acted as an important medium through which older settlers receive the 'standard version' of national identity from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Moreover, it should be noted that the national discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has arisen from a situation in which the nation it seeks to represent no longer exists. This then prompts us to ask how the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has articulated the concept of a nation despite its effective absence, and how they have sought to inculcate the meanings associated with this concept in the wider Tibetan refugee population.

Between the 1960s and the early 1980s, when the Tibetan Government-in-Exile first sought to emphasise the importance of national identity over regional diversity, regional identities continued to have a strong hold over the lives of the first generation of settlers. Moreover, the system of schooling, which had the potential to serve as an important conduit for the discourse of Tibetan nationalism, had only recently been established, and most of the first generation of settlers was excluded from its influence due to their age. As such, the channels for communication between the Government-in-Exile and the first generation of settlers, over the 1960s-1980s,

were rather limited, and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile therefore faced some difficulty in promoting its vision of national discourse to the majority of the public. In view of this, I suggest that national days, in which every settlement was obligated to participate for commemoration and celebration, may have become the only, and most effective, occasions on which Tibetan exiles were brought together for the same express purpose, and on which the Tibetan Government-in-Exile delivered its discourse on nationhood. As discussed earlier, many settlers considered that the changes in the way that Tibetan Uprising Day was commemorated were the result of changes in the national policy of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. This opinion expressed by settlers pointed to a significant connection between national commemorations and the official discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. This connection is important because it allows us to access the discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the changes which may have occurred within it by examining the ceremonies of national holidays. Moreover, it also signifies that the national day ceremonies may have been important occasions on which the negotiations between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and the contradictions embedded in their relationship, were embodied.

As we have noted, the commemorations of the Tibetan Uprising Day up until the 1980s were intended to subordinate participants' regional identities, and even religious identities, to a commonly shared experience of invasion, resistance, flight, and exile. Thus, over the 1960s-1980s, the discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had relied on the narrative of invasion, resistance, flight and exile as themes on which to build its communications, and to address the issue of national identity to the wider Tibetan audience, and also, to the Chinese Government and international supporters. It is also noted that in the narratives represented in the speeches and performances, the absence of the nation in the present was particularly emphasised. Histories were drawn upon within official statements and formalised in bodily practices, which emphasised images of a Tibetan nation in the past and re-affirmed its absence in the present. By focusing on the nation and its current absence, the commemorations invoked the need to continue fighting in order to reclaim their nation.

As such, 'absence' became an important notion which framed and continually supplied a sense of meaning to the Tibetan national discourse. This echoes Falcone

and Wangchuk's (2008) argument that the concepts and sentiment of nationhood are usually constructed and maintained in its absence (2008: 190-191). This characteristic of a currently 'absent' nation however, has prompted Venturino (1997) to regard the concept of a Tibetan nation as largely imagined (cf. 1997: 103). I suggest that it is through this 'imaginary' characteristic (Anderson 1991; Venturino 1997: 103) that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's discourse of nationhood is imbued with a flexibility which enables it to modify its dialogue with internal regional and religious diversities, and negotiate its relationship with multiple external 'others', including the Indian host society, the Chinese Government, and international agencies.

Additionally, it should be noted that in the 1960s-1980s, while national commemorations served as a means by which the Tibetan Government-in-Exile channelled its national discourse to the refugee population, at the same time, it was also adopted by the Bonpo in order to demonstrate their connection to, and participation in, the Tibetan community in exile. By emphasising the importance of national identity over regional and religious diversity, and their shared historical contexts, the Bonpo utilised the occasions of the national commemorations to enact what the Tibetan Government-in-Exile sought to narrate and emphasise, and in so doing, represented their participation in the Tibetan nation. Chapter II discussed the Bonpo leadership's articulation of 'the Bon traditions' as an important part of Tibetan cultural heritage, in order to validate the position of Bon in the Tibetan national identity. Here, it can be seen that the Tibetan national holidays provided the Bonpo with another opportunity to claim that they, too, were part of the Tibetan national community.

However, what has changed over the decades? In 2007-2008, the ceremony to mark Tibetan Uprising Day was considerably shorter than it had been in previous years, and the monks seem to have withdrawn from participation in the commemoration. In addition, the burning of the Chinese flag and effigies of Mao Zedong were no longer part of the ceremony. Moreover, it is noticeable that the statements issued by the CTA seemed to consciously play down the emphasis on the Chinese invasion and Tibetan armed resistance. Although the Chinese Government was still criticised for its policy toward the Tibetans, the statements seemed to avoid provoking conflict between the Tibetans and the Chinese, but rather, focused on the issues of universal human rights

and the development of democracy. Furthermore, instead of emphasising the right of a nation to claim its independence, the announcements stressed the need to preserve and continue the Tibetan culture inside and outside Tibet. These changes seem to indicate that, in 2007-2008, the discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had departed from its demand for an independent nation, and shifted its focus from encouraging resistance to emphasising the importance of the continuation of Tibetan traditions. When did these changes occur, and why?

Shifting from Independence to the Middle-Way: the Late 1980s

In 1987, in a meeting with members of the United States Congress, the Dalai Lama proposed a five-point peace plan, in which he declared a shift in his strategy on the issue of Tibet. This was the first time since the 1950s that the Dalai Lama had proposed to withdraw his demand for an independent Tibet. In the proposal, he suggested that Tibet could be developed into a zone for peace, free from troops and the shadow of war, in order to ease the tensions between China, India and Nepal. According to the Dalai Lama, Tibet would play a neutral role, asserting that it belonged to no-one, and concentrating solely on the continuation and development of the Tibetan culture.

In 1988, in his speech to members of the European Parliament at Strasbourg, the Dalai Lama again emphasised his withdrawal of the demand for independence, and elaborated on his proposal of 1987. In this announcement, he revised his five-point peace plan, and proposed that Tibet would act as a 'self-governing democratic political entity.' The proposal to establish Tibet as an autonomous entity would allow the Chinese Government to take care of Tibet's foreign policy, while Tibet maintained sovereignty over all 'non-political' fields, such as religion, culture, education, environment, and tourism. This is what became known as the middle way. Although the Dalai Lama withdrew this proposal in 1991, since it had received no response from the Chinese Government, the views articulated in the proposal were later adopted by the CTA to frame the Charter of the Tibetan Constitution, which was officially released in June 1991. Moreover, from the 1990s, the CTA modified its diplomatic strategy toward China in terms of this middle way approach as proposed by the Dalai Lama.

This change of national approach soon affected the way the national holidays were commemorated and celebrated, and can be particularly observed in the statements released by the Dalai Lama and the CTA. As Hess (2009) has also noted regarding the Dalai Lama's speech on Tibetan Uprising Day in 2001, the political arguments about the position of Tibet and related issues of Tibetan national identity were consciously played down. Instead, the Dalai Lama emphasised that the preservation of Tibetan culture, the protection of the Tibetan environment, and the demand for human rights should be the major concerns for all Tibetans. These narrative themes remained central to the addresses made by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile on Tibetan Uprising Day in 2007-2008. Also, as is evident in the Tibetan Uprising Day commemorations in Dolanji, 'aggressive' performances, such as the burning of Chinese flags, had been removed from the ceremony.

We have discussed the reasons why the Tibetan Uprising Day ceremony has changed from the perspectives of Paljor, Nyimtso and Nyimtso's parents. However, how do people feel about these changes? According to Rinchen, "*We want to criticise the Chinese Government but we don't want to hurt their people*." "*If we burn the Chinese flag, we would hurt the people in China. That is why we don't do this now*." Being a settlement representative, under the supervision of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, Rinchen's remarks may be considered as being in support of the perspective of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Therefore, I tried to gather opinions from other settlers about the changes to the commemoration ceremony and the shift in national policy, in order to gain further insight into the reactions of the settlers. Gyatso for example, told me that many settlers, especially those who were in their twenties and thirties, still wanted Tibet to be independent, and they personally felt that it would be impossible to free Tibet through the non-violent means officially advocated by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Nyimtso, however, told me that though she agreed with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile about the non-violent approach, she did not support the middle-way. She added, "*However, I understand and respect the decision of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government*."

Unlike the younger generation, many older settlers told me that, for them, there was no difference whether the Tibetan Government-in-Exile asserted an independent approach or a middle-way. In their words, "*We are getting older, and we will die soon. Whether Tibet becomes independent or not, we won't live to see it.*" A number of the

second generation settlers, such as Rinchen, Kunga and Nyimtso, advised me on a number of occasions that, if I asked the older settlers about the two approaches, most would not really understand what 'the middle-way' or even 'becoming independent' actually meant. As Gyatso explained, when talking about 'becoming independent', many elders, such as his parents, thought it meant 'going home', but that their concept of 'home' did not match the vision of Tibetan nationhood articulated by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, i.e. Cholka-Sum (the totality of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo, see the Introduction). As he said, "*They only think of their villages*". As I discussed in Chapter I-II, some elders wanted to return to their villages before they died, and some preferred to stay near to where the Menri Abbot resided. However, none of them seem to care whether Tibet became 'independent' or followed the 'middle-way' approach. This may demonstrate that, for most of the first generation, national identity was still an alien notion, and the meanings associated with it were relatively vague, especially when compared to their regional and religious identities.

This is very different from the second and third generations, who stressed that the maintenance of a Tibetan national identity is the only way to ensure the continuity of their regional and religious traditions. For many of these young people, national identity should always be put before their regional and religious identifications, and Tibetans should continue fighting for their political independence. These remarks however, suggest that a range of diverse perspectives remain regarding the newly adopted national policy within the Tibetan community in exile (Anand 2000; Hess 2009).

In the 1990s, when the CTA began to adopt the middle-way in their diplomatic strategy, there was a huge increase in the number criticisms voiced among the Tibetan refugees. In response to these critics, the Dalai Lama suggested holding a referendum to decide if the middle-way approach should be continued. Therefore, the CTA conducted a preliminary poll among Tibetans (in their terms, including those inside and outside Tibet) between 1995 and 1997.[46] According to the CTA, the result demonstrated that the majority of Tibetans fully supported the Dalai Lama's decision. Since then, the middle-way approach has been formally addressed by the CTA in their statements about the future of Tibet, and applied as the strategy for their

[46] See the brochure for *The Middle-Way Approach: A Framework for Resolving the Issue of Tibet* (2006), published by the Department of Information and International Relations, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

negotiations with the Chinese Government.[47] The result of this poll is significant because it represented and confirmed the supreme leadership of the Dalai Lama among the Tibetan refugee population.[48]

When reflecting on the statements made by the CTA in 2007-2008 (Appendix B), it can be seen that, although the approaches of Tibetan national discourse have changed, the emphasis on the leadership of the Dalai Lama continues, and is even more pronounced. For example, calling for support for the middle-way was phrased in terms of support for the Dalai Lama. The narratives of the CTA seem to suggest that the importance of the middle-way approach does not really lie in its content, but rather, in the fact that it is championed by the Dalai Lama. This perspective of the CTA is also reflected in the remarks made by Lumo, Rinchen, Nyimtso and many young settlers in Dolanji, who stressed that they supported the concerns of the Dalai Lama, though with some difference of opinion. Thus, it seems that the Dalai Lama has become the central reason, and in fact, the only reason, that the CTA has been able to calm the conflicts and arguments arising from within the Tibetan population, over the change of direction in the national approach. This leads us to consider that, in the discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the Dalai Lama has become a 'summarising symbol' (Ortner 1973: 1340), who condenses meanings, symbols, and sentiments relating to all aspects of the Tibetan way of life and expresses them all-at-once (see also Nowak 1984).

I suggest that this focus on the Dalai Lama as a means of invoking a sense of cultural continuity and national unity may have only recently become particularly important to the national discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. We have noted that in the 1960s-1980s, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had relied heavily on the

[47] Since 2002, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has sent its envoys to Beijing to discuss the issue of Tibet every year. However, according to the CTA, the discussions have not yet reached any positive results. In March 2008, protests against the Chinese erupted among Tibetans in Tibet, and these were followed by a violent suppression of the protestors by the Chinese Government. Due to the increase in tensions between Beijing and Dharamsala, the meetings between envoys have been called off since 2008.

[48] On the 17th-22nd November 2008, at the request of the Dalai Lama, a special meeting was held in Dharamsala, which aimed to discuss and rethink the national policy of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. The meeting was attended by representatives from worldwide Tibetan settlements and officials from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. The settlement representatives, who had collected opinions from their settlers before the meeting, voted to decide whether the Tibetan Government-in-Exile should continue the middle-way approach, or shift its policy back to the independence approach. The meeting concluded on the 22nd November by declaring that most of the participants had agreed to follow the middle-way approach on the issue of the future of Tibet.

narratives of invasion, resistance, flight and independence to invoke sentiments of national belonging, and articulate a collective suffering and cause for all Tibetans. However, with the shift of approach, the CTA could no longer maintain the sentiment for national solidarity by generating an emotional opposition towards the Chinese population, for example, via the burning of the Chinese national flag. In this context, the Dalai Lama became an important icon with the potential to continuously invoke and embody the connection shared by all Tibetans in exile, and as a source of continuity for Tibetan identity (Nowak 1984). Therefore, while the arguments within the Tibetan population may continue over the effectiveness of the middle-way approach, by emphasising the leadership of the Dalai Lama, the CTA is responding to any conflicting opinions by proffering the Dalai Lama as symbolic of the continuity of the Tibetan nation.

It should be noted, though, that since the establishment of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the Dalai Lama has always been an important part of the representation of Tibetan national identity. This is reflected in the fact that, from 1960 onwards, the birthdays of the Dalai Lama and his mother have been held to be important national events, celebrated by every Tibetan settlement in exile. However, I suggest that it was not until the 1990s that the role of the Dalai Lama became increasingly important, after the CTA had started to shift its strategic approach. To date, although the birthday of the Dalai Lama's mother is no longer celebrated in most of the Tibetan settlements, the Dalai Lama's birthday is still an important national day among the Tibetan refugee population. As I shall argue later, from the perspective of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and also of the Bonpo in Dolanji, the celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday may, over the last 20 years, have become more important than the Tibetan Uprising Day celebrations. In Dharamsala, the commemoration of Tibetan Uprising Day is still very popular, and is often marked by protests against the Chinese Government. However, from the perspective of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, a cautious approach has become more important, given that the Tibetan Uprising Day is associated with many sensitive political issues centring on the status of Tibet. Also, as happened in March 2008, the emphasis on this commemoration may indirectly increase tensions and give rise to violent conflict between the Tibetans and the Chinese in Tibet. In Dolanji, as noted, the Tibetan Uprising Day ceremony has gone into significant decline. However, it should also be noted that the decline of this commemoration in Dolanji is not merely

a response to the change in national approach. Rather, it reflects the careful attitude of the Bonpo leadership in monitoring their strategies for the promotion and preservation of the Bon religion over the past two decades.

Changes in the Discourse on National Identity from the Perspective of the Bonpo Leadership

Over the past two decades, the monastics of Menri monastery have been making every effort to develop, or so to speak, rehabilitate the Bon religion in Tibet. These efforts, to a certain extent, have been indirectly supported by the Chinese Government. In 2007, in one of my interviews with a Bonpo scholar who had visited U-Tsang and Amdo several times since the 1980s, he pointed out that, in recent decades, the Chinese Government had tended to promote the Bon religion over Buddhism in Tibetan societies (see also Ramble 1997: 381-383). Two reasons may lie behind the Chinese Government's encouragement of the Bon religion. Firstly, by asserting that the Bon religion represents the indigenous culture of Tibetans, the Chinese leadership depicts Buddhism as a foreign religion which originated in India, thereby undermining the role played by Buddhism in representing Tibetan culture. In so doing, the Chinese Government is seeking to dislodge Buddhism from its position at the centre of Tibetan culture, and thereby dislodge the Dalai Lama from the central position he occupies Tibetan life as a Buddhist leader. Evidence for this strategy on the part of the Chinese Government can be seen in the number of senior posts in the administrative office of the Tibet Autonomous Region in Lhasa, which are reserved for Bonpo, rather than Buddhists.[49]

Secondly, the Chinese Government's encouragement of the development of Bon also represents an attempt to increase the conflict between the Bonpo and Buddhists. As discussed in the Introduction and Chapter II, the relationship between Bon and Buddhist monastics has, since the eleventh century, been subject to disputes over the origins of their respective religious traditions and the authenticity of their religious doctrines. The contested nature of the relationship between Bon and Buddhism was reflected in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's discourse on national identity, as articulated in the 1960s, which excluded the Bon religion from the representation of Tibetan religious traditions. Bon has been formally recognised by the Tibetan

[49] This phenomenon was observed by some Bonpos who had visited Tibet, and also by a few foreign scholars, who had conducted research in and around Tibet over the past decade.

Government-in-Exile since 1977. However, the followers of Bon are still in the minority, and the political influence of Bonpo monastics, compared to the four Buddhist denominations, is still marginal in the Tibetan community in exile. Given this situation, the friendly attitude expressed by the Chinese Government toward Bon is meant to show the Bonpo in exile that the Chinese leadership understands the importance of Bon in Tibetan culture. Moreover, by promoting the position of Bon, the Chinese leadership also seeks to generate conflict between the Bon and Buddhist populations, both inside and outside Tibet.

The intentions of the Chinese Government are further evidenced by the return visit made by the Abbot in Dolanji to Tibet in 2004. During this three-month trip, the Chinese Government allowed the Abbot to visit his family in Amdo, as well as many important Bon monasteries throughout Tibet. Although the Bonpo monks in Dolanji have emphasised that the trip was made for purely religious purposes, the meanings which have been attributed to it seem to be more than simply religious. Firstly, the Abbot of Menri monastery is regarded by Bonpo inside and outside Tibet as being the highest spiritual leader of the Bon religion (Chapter II). Therefore, we may expect that the return of the Abbot would have reaffirmed Bon religious identity amongst the Bonpo in Tibet. In addition, as emphasised by the monks in Dolanji, this trip has also contributed to re-enforcing the connection between the Bonpo inside Tibet and those in exile.

The monks who had accompanied the Abbot to Tibet stressed that their visit would not have been possible if the Chinese Government had not given them special permission. According to them, many Bonpos in Tibet, including the laity and the monks, were therefore grateful to the Chinese leadership for allowing the Abbot to return. These remarks suggest that the Chinese Government regarded the visit of the Bonpo leader as being significant, the inference being that the Chinese Government does care about the preservation of Tibetan culture in Tibet, and has therefore made efforts to encourage Tibetans to express their ‘native’ identity and ‘native’ culture. Moreover, I suggest that the Chinese leadership may also have intended to use the Abbot’s visit in order to demonstrate a special connection between the Chinese Government and the Bonpo leadership in exile. This demonstration may therefore be seen as encouraging the Bonpo inside and outside Tibet to promote their religious identity over Buddhism, potentially increasing the tensions between Bonpo and Buddhists.

However, it is interesting to note that, contrary to the expectations of the Chinese Government, the visit of the Abbot to Tibet carries a different significance for the Bonpo in Dolanji, the Dalai Lama, and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. As emphasised by the monks in Dolanji, the Abbot's return to Tibet should be considered as indicating direct support of the Bonpo in exile for the middle-way approach of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. According to them, this trip was purely religious, aiming to encourage the Chinese Government to work for the preservation of Tibetan religious traditions - an important concern which has been emphasised by the Dalai Lama in his middle-way approach. It is important to note that this interpretation of the Bonpo represents a careful negotiation in their stance between the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Chinese Government. With the conscious promotion of Bon in Tibet by the Chinese Government from the 1980s, the Bonpo monastics in Dolanji have been caught between maintaining their relationship with both the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Chinese leadership. In this context, the middle-way proposed by the Dalai Lama has provided the Bonpo with some essential support. By emphasising their agreement with the middle-way policy, the Bonpo monks in Dolanji have not only highlighted the importance of their efforts to work for the development of Bon inside Tibet, but they have also maintained their loyalty to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

For the Dalai Lama and the CTA, the return of the Bonpo leadership to Tibet is also significant, given that it may have helped to open a channel of negotiation between the Chinese Government and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, enabling them to work on the middle-way approach. As the head of the Bon religion, the Abbot of Dolanji ranks alongside the four leaders of the Buddhist denominations, as the most senior religious figures in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Among these five key religious figures, the Abbot of the Bon religion was the first and only religious leader allowed by the Chinese Government to return to Tibet for a visit. Therefore, while the Chinese Government consciously promotes the Bon religion in order to suppress the (re)development of Buddhism in Tibet, in turn the Tibetan Government-in-Exile also finds itself reliant on the Bonpo and the preservation of Bon in Tibet as a means to establish dialogue with the Chinese Government. This brings us to consideration of the complexities embedded in the relationship between the Bonpo, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Chinese Government, and the ways in which these

complexities have effectively empowered the Bonpo in their negotiations for the position of Bonpo religious identity inside and outside Tibet.

However, even with these advantages in mind, Bonpo monastics remain cautious when negotiating the relationship between the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Chinese Government. This can be observed from their attitude towards the way that the Tibetan Uprising Day was commemorated in the past. We have noted that up until the 1980s, the entire population of Dolanji, including the laity and the monastics, displayed a strong commitment to participation in this commemoration. At that time, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's discourse on national identity was still centred on the pursuit of an independent Tibet, and participation in the commemoration of Tibetan Uprising Day was usually interpreted as participation in the movement for national independence. In this context, the participation of the entire Dolanji population in the national commemoration was intended to show the Tibetan Government-in-Exile that the Bonpo were fully part of the Tibetan nation and had devoted themselves to the national movement. However, in 2007 and 2008, none of the members of the monastic community attended the ceremony. The absence of monks indicates that Bonpo monastics are intentionally absenting themselves from association with the political sentiments represented by this commemoration. According to the Bonpo monks, such involvement might easily cause problems for the preservation of Bon in Tibet, and add pressure to some monks in their interactions with the Chinese population in respect of religious affairs. However, it is interesting to note that, in contrast to the caution exercised towards the Tibetan Uprising Day commemorations, the Bonpo monastics display great enthusiasm towards the celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday.

Celebrating the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's Birthday

As an annual celebration, the Tibetan Uprising Day commemorations were designed to evoke images and sentiments relating to the past, and to realise them within the present. Unlike the Tibetan Uprising Day, the celebration of the fourteenth Dalai Lama's birthday is aimed at legitimising the present national order, namely, the leadership role occupied by the Dalai Lama, and to transform it into a social experience representing the continuity of the past in the present (and into the future). In Dolanji, the celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday was a whole day event, in which adult settlers, monastics, and school teachers and students participated.

The celebration began with the offering of silk scarves by all the participants, placed on the altar in front of the photograph of the Dalai Lama. During the ceremony, the settlement representative read out a statement from the CTA, which was followed by speeches made by the representatives of the monastery and the school. The CTA's statement in 2007 (see Appendix B) pointed out that, according to Tibetan astrology, this particular year was a year of obstacles for the Dalai Lama. Therefore, the CTA called for all Tibetans to pray for the Dalai Lama. Akin to the statements made on the Tibetan Uprising Day in 2007-2008, the CTA stressed the importance of the middle-way approach, and emphasised that it had been fully supported by all Tibetans. The CTA expressed its disappointment in the policy of the Chinese Government toward Tibetans and Tibetan culture. However, the statement urged Tibetans to be patient and to continue to believe in the efficacy of the non-violent approach. Additionally, the importance of education was also stressed, and the CTA emphasised that all Tibetans, particularly the second and third generations, were responsible for promoting an awareness of Tibet (including the middle-way, Tibetan history, and Tibetan cultural heritage) and explaining these issues 'properly' to their foreign friends, including the Chinese.

Compared to the statement by the CTA, the speeches from the monastery and school representatives were rather short. Both speeches expressed their gratitude to the Dalai Lama for his efforts to develop school education, and his recognition and promotion of 'the Bon traditions.' These emphases may be considered as echoing those made at the visit of the Dalai Lama to Dolanji in April 2007, at which time he declared himself to be impressed by the high achievement of the students in the CST Dolanji and the monastics in the Menri dialectic school. After the addresses, the lay adults were served with *chang* (a Tibetan beer, made with rice, barley or millet), prepared by the settlement office, and the students began performing Tibetan dances, songs and dramas for the rest of the day.

I asked some settlers from the second generation why more people were participating in the celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday than in the Tibetan Uprising Day. Karma, who was in his late twenties and a secretary in the settlement office, told me,

> "*This is about now, and the Uprising Day is about the past. What we were mourning for on the Uprising Day was something which has already passed, and which we are not familiar with. But on the Dalai Lama's*

birthday, we are celebrating what is important and happening now. I mean, the Dalai Lama is the hope for us Tibetans now, and that is why we show more interest in his birthday".

Karma's reply illustrates the attitude of the second generation toward the past and the present; it also reflects a change of emphasis on the issue of national identity, which has occurred over generations and over the decades. We have discussed how the Tibetan Uprising Day commemorations had acted to evoke a collective recollection of the past among the first generation, in order to support the newly introduced notion of national identity. However, with the change of national policy and the growth in population of second and third generation Bonpo, who have never been to Tibet, awareness of the past has weakened to some degree, because it is no longer evoked or reflected on in the everyday experience of younger generations. Therefore, we can say that while the sense of national identity held by the first generation reflects their experience of invasion, flight and exile, most from the second and third generation seem to focus on the leadership of the Dalai Lama in terms of identifying with the Tibetan national community. However, apart from the leadership of the Dalai Lama, I suggest that the development of education has also provided another means by which the younger generation learn about the past and the present. This can be understood from the emphasis on education reflected in the statement of the CTA in 2007.

In large part this statement was consciously addressed to the second and third generations, who now form more than half of the audience at national ceremonies. In its statement, the CTA emphasised the importance of education in representing a 'correct' knowledge of Tibetan history and culture, and requested that young Tibetans impart what they had learnt from school to audiences worldwide. These narratives suggest that, although the CTA may find it difficult to articulate an understanding of the present by evoking shared memories of the past, it has adopted schooling as a new means by which it can transmit the experience of the past and the meaning of life in exile to future generations. As Gellner (1983, 1994, 1997) has put it, mass education is important in the development of national identity because it provides a framework for the community to 'remember' its history, and serves to standardise the idioms and the ways in which the public express their national sentiments. In the case of Tibetan refugees, the role of schooling has been

particularly emphasised by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in recent decades. I suggest that one of the main reasons is that it provides an effective means to impart knowledge of a culture to the younger generation in the context of exile. Moreover, as will be discussed in Chapter V, schooling, which gives the Tibetan Government-in-Exile a dominant role in monitoring the selection and representation of national knowledge, also becomes an important medium by which the Tibetan Government-in-Exile represents its political legitimacy to the Tibetan and non-Tibetan public.

This gradual shift of focus of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile from the first generation to the second and third generation can also be observed from the way they have sought to impart knowledge of the middle-way approach to the Tibetan population in recent years. In order to ensure that the majority of Tibetan exiles understand the context and content of the middle-way policy, the CTA published a brochure, entitled *The Middle-Way Approach: a Framework for Resolving the Issue of Tibet*, in 2006. When I was in Dolanji, hundreds of brochures were delivered from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile to the settlement office, from where they were sent to the school and to every household. It is important to note that, in Dolanji, as in other Tibetan settlements, most of the first generation is illiterate. That is to say, the brochure was particularly targeted at second and third generation Bonpo, who have been to school and can read and write. Moreover, written in English, this brochure was aimed not only at telling Tibetan readers how to explain their national approach to their foreign sponsors and friends, but was also consciously targeted at foreign readers.

In summary, I suggest that the changes in the character and role of Tibetan national ceremonies over the last two decades can be ascribed largely to generational change, the different ways in which the past is accessed and experienced, and the provision of schooling for subsequent generations in exile. In the decades prior to the early 1980s, the national ceremonies were probably the only, and the most effective, communication channel between first generation settlers and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Therefore, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile treated national commemorations and celebrations as important educational media by which it could impart knowledge of Tibetan nationhood amongst the participants. However, with the development of schooling, textbooks and school activities, more effective means

have developed by which the Tibetan Government-in-Exile can systematically transmit its discourse on Tibetan nationality to successive generations. To date, although the commemorations and celebrations of Tibetan national days remain important, they seem to have become occasions through which a sense of cultural continuity is encouraged among participants. Their role as educational media, in teaching the audience what to remember and what to forget, seems gradually to have declined, largely replaced in this respect by school education. I will return to the role of schooling in constructing a sense of Tibetan national community in Chapter V, which, as a counterpart to this chapter, focuses on the role of textbooks in order to understand the connection between national power and official knowledge.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed at understanding the connection between annual commemorations and celebrations and the discourses of Tibetan national identity, from the perspective of the Bonpo in Dolanji. It is argued that annual ceremonies bear an important function in telling and retelling what a society remembers and what it wishes to forget. I have suggested that the annual ceremonies should be understood as a narrative form and a ritual performance, given that they not only (re)tell the central narratives of a society, but also aim to reflect and resolve the contradictions embedded in the present social order. The findings suggest that, compared to religious ceremonies, in which the identity of Bon is always the principal narrative, the commemorations and celebrations of Tibetan national days tell the history of flight and exile, and emphasise the political leadership of the Dalai Lama. However, by examining the changes which have occurred in the performance of ceremonies and the meanings they reflect and impart to the participants in Dolanji, it is argued that national ceremonies have also served as important occasions on which the Bonpo negotiate their relationship with different political powers and modify the position of their religion in Tibetan societies inside and outside Tibet.

In addition, this chapter argues that national ceremonies have been recently modified in order to address subsequent generations of Tibetan refugees. It is argued that, with the increase in number of younger Bonpo, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has focused on school education as a new means by which to deliver its discourse on nationalism. I have suggested that the important role played by national ceremonies

in the 1960s-1980s may have been gradually replaced by schooling, which allows the Tibetan Government-in-Exile to systematically and more effectively transmit its perspective on knowledge of the past and present of Tibetan nationhood. In the end, it is found that the narrative themes contained in national ceremonies have increasingly emphasised the importance of the Dalai Lama to Tibetan national identity. This finding suggests that the fourteenth Dalai Lama has become a 'summarising symbol' of Tibetan identity, a figure to whom the Bonpo aim to demonstrate the importance of 'the Bon traditions,' and by whom the Tibetan Government-in-Exile seeks to represent the maintenance of Tibetan culture in the context of exile. The next chapter will examine the visit of the Dalai Lama to Dolanji in 2007 in order to explore the connections between the Dalai Lama and Tibetan national identity, and how these connections are understood by Bonpo monastics and laity from different generations.

Plate 10. Dolanji Foundation Day (2007): Chanting the Bon Prayer

Plate 11. Students singing the duet 'We will go back to Tibet' (2007)

Chapter IV

Negotiating Identities: the Visit of the Dalai Lama to Dolanji

After examining the ways in which Bonpo monastics have addressed the importance of Bon to Tibetan nationalism (Chapter II), and how the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has sought to instil its discourse on national identity into the way of life in Dolanji (Chapter III), this chapter turns to the 'dialogue' between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile as represented in the Dalai Lama's visit to Dolanji in April 2007. By exploring the interaction between the Dalai Lama and the Bonpo throughout this event, the issues raised in Chapters I-III will be further examined. These issues include the narratives of 'the Bon traditions' asserted by the Bonpo, the attitude of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and Buddhist monastics towards the Bon religion, and the negotiation between religious diversity and a Tibetan national identity in terms of different generations.

Taking up these issues, this chapter seeks to unravel the ways in which the Bonpo manipulate a variety of resources in order to negotiate their position within the Tibetan community in exile. It argues that the boundaries as they are conceived between Bonpos and Buddhists, and between Tibetans (including Bonpos and Buddhists) and non-Tibetans, are largely manifested through their interactions with different internal and external 'others', and in particular, in their responses to the narratives composed by 'others'. In the negotiations between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the differences between Bon and Buddhism are sometimes subsumed into the similarities they share, in order to represent a homogeneous national identity. However, at other times, the boundaries are emphasised, in order to maintain the distinctive 'traditions' asserted by both sides. This flexibility in the negotiation of boundaries indicates that the distinction between selves and others involves both the process of self-ascription and ascription by others (Barth 1969, 2000; Cohen 1982, 1985, 1986, 2000; Donnan and Wilson 1999). Also, it shows that the concept of identity or ethnicity is mostly visible in dynamic contexts, and the meanings associated with it can only be approached via people's interactions, when the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are contested, negotiated and modified in order to address particular audiences, and to fulfil the immediate needs emerging from the situation of the moment.

The Visit of the Dalai Lama, 20-22 April 2007

The main purpose of the visit of the Dalai Lama in 2007 was to host the opening ceremony of the Tibetan Yung Drung Bon Library, established by Menri monastery. This was the second visit by the Dalai Lama since the founding of the settlement. His first visit was in April 1988, ten years after the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had acknowledged the Bon religion (see Karmay 1998; Thargyal 2001:45-46). Many of my informants (mainly from the first generation) recalled that, in 1988, they were excited, but also curious to know how the Dalai Lama would communicate his perspective on Bon in his visit. As their remarks indicate,

> "*Of course we were very excited to see the Dalai Lama in Dolanji. But most of us also wanted to hear what he thought about the Bonpo. This was because what he said would be very influential, and could change the way that Buddhists treat us*."

These accounts indicate that, for many elders, the importance of the Dalai Lama lay in his authority to validate the Bon identity. This authority mainly stems from the fact that the Dalai Lama is the head of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Occupying this leadership role means that the perspectives and statements he articulates also represent the official discourse of national identity. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Dalai Lama's opinions, for example, his proposals on the middle-way approach, usually directly affect the way the Tibetan Government-in-Exile formulates its national policy and national discourse.

Therefore, in 1988, at a time in which the Bonpo were still struggling for their social and political position in the Tibetan community in exile, the Dalai Lama's visit was regarded by the settlers as being vitally significant. As they remembered, in his visit the Dalai Lama had emphasised that the Bon religion formed an important part of Tibetan culture, and promised that the Bonpo would receive the same level of care as Buddhists did from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. For the Bonpo, this visit marked out a renewal of their relationship with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. According to the Bonpo leadership, the Dalai Lama's statements represented a further official approval of their Bon identity, and affirmed the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's incorporation of the Bonpo into their representations of

Tibetan national community. Given that there is little record (for example, photos, videos and records of his speech) left of his first visit, it is difficult to ascertain what the Dalai Lama actually said to the Bonpo. However, the settlers' recollections suggest that the visit of the Dalai Lama in 1988 was also significant to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. For the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, this visit was meant to demonstrate that their recognition of the Bon religion was not merely a matter of rhetoric, but would be put into practice, and result in treating Dolanji equally to other settlements.

With this in mind, we might wonder how, after 20 years, the Dalai Lama and the Bonpo might have perceived the significance of the April 2007 return visit to Dolanji. Given that two decades had passed, the relationship between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and the political and social position of the Bonpo in the Tibetan community in exile, must have experienced a degree of change. These changes may therefore have affected how the Bonpo leadership and the Dalai Lama approached the event, and the attitudes they presented to each other. As argued in Chapter III, collective ceremonies are usually framed to reflect social contradictions, and, by offering some symbolic solutions, re-affirm the social relationships which may conflict and contest with one another in social practices. These narrative and ritual characteristics of collective ceremonies can also be observed in the series of activities held throughout the visit of the Dalai Lama in 2007. However, it should be noted that, unlike the annual commemorations and celebrations, which routinely adapt to social change by modifying the focus and purpose of ceremonies according to the social environment, the Dalai Lama's visit was a one-time event. This means that the Dalai Lama's visit may have been set out for, and limited to, particular purposes. Thus, it would have been anticipated that the Dalai Lama's visit might involve intense engagements between participants who represent different perspectives, and who might try to utilise the occasion in order to achieve 'solutions' to the conflicts embedded in their relationships with one another.

Given this, I suggest that the Dalai Lama's visit to Dolanji, in which events were directed by both the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Bonpo leadership, provides us with an important opportunity to assess the interactions between the two sides, and to see how they utilised different resources in order to assert their narratives of religious and national identity, and negotiate their relationship with one

another. The main body of this chapter therefore, is structured in order to highlight this 'dialogical' characteristic as embodied in the interactions between the Bonpo and the Dalai Lama throughout the event. I first explore the preparations made by the settlement, and the expectations expressed by the laity and the monastics. I then move on to the arrival of the Dalai Lama and the ways in which the monastery, which acted as the leadership of the settlement, welcomed him and presented 'the Bon traditions' to him. The responses from the Dalai Lama are then discussed in terms of three statements which he made, which involved slightly different audiences and reflected the adoption of different attitudes and different roles by which the Dalai Lama positioned himself and was in turn positioned by the participants. The final part represents the reactions from the laity, exploring how people of different backgrounds perceived and responded to the actions and statements of the Dalai Lama.

Preparations

In 2007, up to two months prior to the Dalai Lama's visit, a growing sense of excitement, honour, and tension was evident throughout Dolanji. Wherever I went, villagers and students would regularly remind me in excited tones that the Dalai Lama was coming, and that I must stay to see him and receive his blessing. The whole settlement, including the monastics and the laity, was busy preparing everything in order to present the Bon religion and the people of Dolanji in the 'best' possible light to the Dalai Lama.

Next to the monastery complex, the Indian workers and the monks worked day and night in order to finish the construction of the Tibetan Yung Drung Bon Library, for which the Dalai Lama was supposed to host the opening ceremony. The Abbot went several times a day every day to check the progress of the library construction and ensure that every detail had been carefully considered. Some old settlers, who had been skilled craftsmen before they fled Tibet, were recruited by the monastery to make ritual implements, which, decorated with the eight auspicious signs (*bkra shis rtags brgyad*), were going to serve as offerings to the Dalai Lama. In addition, monks were divided into different groups to whitewash the temples and monastic buildings, clean the road around the monastery, and plant new grass in the forecourt of the main temple. In the village, laity received directives from the settlement office to

whitewash their houses and clean the public paths. In the school, teachers supervised students in rehearsing traditional Tibetan dances and songs, which, according to Tsering, a teacher of Tibetan, were meant to demonstrate to the Dalai Lama that the school was actively ensuring the preservation and continuation of Tibetan 'traditions' in the next generation.

While most laity expressed an excitement about the Dalai Lama's visit, the monastery, especially its leadership, in contrast showed a cautious attitude. The Abbot and guest masters had taken pains to warn foreigners that the Indian police would arrive before the Dalai Lama in order to check the details for everyone in the area, especially the guests. According to them, if the police found any suspicious individuals, the Dalai Lama's visit would possibly be changed or cancelled, and the settlement would be in trouble with the Indian district and state authorities, and with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Therefore, guests were advised to behave with care and guard what they said if questioned by the Indian police and, if possible, to move to nearby Indian towns, such as Solan. The worries expressed by the settlement leadership, and their cautious attitude towards the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Indian authorities, echo what was discussed in previous chapters regarding the marginal situation occupied by Bonpo inside the Tibetan community and within Indian society.

However, the worries of the leadership did not stop the Bonpo, who had settled in other settlements and other countries, from coming to Dolanji. Many Bonpos, some quite advanced in years, arrived in Dolanji one to two weeks prior to the Dalai Lama. Some of them stayed in their relatives and friends' houses in the village, and some in the guesthouse run by the lay settlers. Upon the arrival of the Dalai Lama, every house in Dolanji was packed, and many people ended up sleeping on the ground. The monastery guesthouse was also packed with many foreigners from Europe and America (mostly from America), who had been financially supporting the establishment of the new library and were invited by the Abbot as 'special guests' for this event.

When I asked Tsenam, in his mid thirties, how he felt about the crowds spilling into Dolanji, he said,

> "*I never thought our Dolanji could contain so many people. I think this is the first time that Dolanji has been as full as this. It seems that Dolanji has suddenly become important. But the crowds only give me a headache*".

Tsenam's house was also filled with the family of his uncle, A Khu Wangdu, who had arrived with Tsenam's cousin and nephew a week before the Dalai Lama. A Khu Wangdu, in his seventies, stayed mostly in Manali, where he ran a grocery shop and helped to take care of his grandson when his son went to other settlements to sell winter clothes and woven carpets. In reply to my question about how he felt about the visit of the Dalai Lama, A Khu Wangdu said, "*This is a very precious moment in my life, and also a very special moment for our Bonpo*". A Khu Wangdu had prepared a brand-new Chupa (*phyu pa*, traditional Tibetan dress) in the regional style of Kham, for his three year old grandson, Phuntsok. According to him, this would be the first time that Phuntsok had received the blessing of the Dalai Lama, and a new Chupa was required to show their great respect for the Dalai Lama and for the importance of the occasion.

Yangchen, in her late twenties and a Tibetan teacher in a CST school in Bir, also returned to Dolanji. She told me,

> "*Many Bonpos are coming not just because they want to see the Dalai Lama. They can still see him in other places. They want to come because they feel this is special, I mean, because the Dalai Lama is coming to visit a Bonpo settlement.* "

Echoing Yangchen's account, Tsenam remarked, "*His [the Dalai Lama's] purpose is to see the Bonpo. This makes us feel 'honoured'*". The remarks made by A Khu Wangdu, Yangchen, Tsenam and some lay elders indicate that the Dalai Lama's presence represented more than a simple visit to a newly built library. For most of the settlers, his visit was significant because it illustrated the care that the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile have for the Bonpo. For them, this care is 'special,' important, and 'honoured' because the Bonpo had previously been excluded from the attention of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. However, in contrast to the laity, many Bonpo monastics seemed to view the Dalai Lama's visit from a slightly different perspective.

Replying to my question of why people were so concerned about this event, and why the monks in particular tried so hard to ensure that every corner of the monastery had been carefully examined and every detail of the rituals had been well prepared, Yung Drung, a senior monk, told me,

> *"We wanted the Dalai Lama to see us at our best because we wanted him to understand that we work hard to continue our religion and preserve our traditions. We are a small village. Our monastery is not as big as Sera or other Buddhist monasteries in South India. But we wanted him to understand that our dialectic school is very well organised, and our monks have a very good education here. But we did not do this just to impress him. The most important thing was that this was our chance to present our religion and culture to the Dalai Lama. Of course we needed to do our best, to let him know that we are very proud of our religion and culture and that he should respect them too".*

Yung Drung's account largely met with the agreement of his monastic colleagues, many of whom, such as Gyatso, emphasised that the Abbot and the monks felt pressured about this event because they wanted Buddhist (monks) to understand "*what the real Bon traditions are*". These accounts illustrate that for the Bonpo monks, the Dalai Lama's visit was important because it provided an occasion for them to represent what they claimed to be 'the Bon traditions.' Moreover, it is clear that, for them, 'the Bon traditions' which they would present to the Dalai Lama were not only addressed to him as the head of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, but most importantly, in his role as a leading Buddhist monastic. As already noted, the Dalai Lama is not only the head of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile; he is also the lineage holder and head of the Gelug-pa, one of the Buddhist denominations which dominated the formal Lhasa Government and the early years of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (Anand 2000; Hess 2009; Nowak 1984). The interplay of these two roles occupied by the Dalai Lama had been present in the formation of the previous Lhasa Government, in which religious and political spheres were officially combined (Dreyfus 2002; Kolas 1996; Nowak 1984). From the establishment of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the Dalai Lama's role as both the political and religious leader of the Tibetan nation has also been emphasised by its official

discourse and has framed the way that Tibetan nationalism is represented.[50] Dreyfus (2002) therefore, uses the term "religious nationalism" to highlight this characteristic of Tibetan nationalism.

However, the importance and significance of the dual role occupied by the Dalai Lama, is understood differently by Bonpo laity and monastics, which explains the different attitudes they expressed towards the visit of the Dalai Lama. As discussed, most of the Bonpo laity interpreted the Dalai Lama's visit as reaffirming a close connection between the Bonpo and their national leadership. However, for the Bonpo monks, the importance of the Dalai Lama seemed to lie more in his role as a high Buddhist lama, in response to which they found it necessary to stress the similarities and distinctions between Bon and Buddhism. Many of my monastic informants pointed out that the Dalai Lama was a well educated Buddhist monastic, and therefore, he could easily identify the subtle differences between Bon and Buddhist rituals and doctrines, which might not be recognised by lay followers in either Bon or Buddhism. As the monks emphasised, this was why they wanted to make sure that the religious symbols and rituals they presented would follow 'the Bon traditions' proper.

The emphasis placed on the contrasts between Bon and Buddhism, by the Bonpo monastics, might also have been reflected in the Dalai Lama's first visit. However, I suggest that the focus on the relationship between Bon and Buddhism in these two visits may have been slightly different. In 1988, at which time the Bonpo's position in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had just been confirmed and was still unstable, the attitude of the Bonpo monastics to the Dalai Lama was a lot more cautious, especially when considering the differences between Bon and Buddhism. In this context, the importance of the unity of the Tibetan refugee population may have been highlighted, and the contrast between Bon and Buddhism may have been played

[50] The roles occupied by the Dalai Lama may probably be changed in the near future. On 10 March 2011, the Dalai Lama resigned his political leadership of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. His request was approved by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on March 25 (*Tibetan Review* 2011 April: 10). This approval means that the newly elected Prime Minister (Kalon Tripa) represents the highest executive power in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and will act as the political head of the Tibetan community in exile. On March 20, the election of the third Prime Minister began, and on 27 April, Lobsang Sangay, a Harvard graduate with a doctoral degree in Law, born in exile and in his early forties, won the election with 55% of the vote (*Tibetan Review* 2011 May: 6). He will assume his post in August 2011, and succeed to the political role held by the Dalai Lama over the past five decades of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

down, in subordination to their shared similarities. In 2007, although the Bonpo leadership were still cautious when dealing with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, their attitude was slightly different, given that the position of Bon in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had been firmly recognised, and the development of Bon inside and outside Tibet had been much improved. Therefore, we might expect that, in the 2007 visit, Bonpo monastics were more confident in expressing the differences between Bon and Buddhism, in order to illustrate the distinctive qualities of the Bon religion and its equal importance to Buddhism in Tibetan national identity.

Arriving

On the 20th April 2007, the Dalai Lama arrived by helicopter in Solan, an Indian town near Dolanji. Some of the monastics from Menri monastery, including the head teacher at the dialectic school and a few of the senior monks, went to Solan to welcome him. In greeting and as a sign of respect, Ponlop Rinpoche, the head teacher of Menri dialectic school, offered the Dalai Lama a blue silk scarf, which, according to his explanation, "*is a special colour within the Bon tradition.*" According to Ponlop Rinpoche, the colour blue, which is usually described as the colour of the sky and the ocean, symbolises the qualities of 'eternity and permanence.' He emphasised that, according to the Bon texts, when Tonpa Shenrab, the founder of Bon, visited the world of human beings, he transformed himself into the form of a blue cuckoo. For this reason, the colour blue is regarded by Bonpo monasteries as being the core colour which symbolises the Bon religion.

It is important to note that, on this occasion, the scarf presented by Menri monastery to the Dalai Lama was not simply a gesture of greeting to the leader of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Rather, by adopting a core Bon symbol, the scarf represented a formal greeting from a monastic of the Bon religion to the head of the Tibetan Buddhist religion. This performance shows that the Bonpo monastics interpreted their meeting with the Dalai Lama as an engagement between two denominations: Bon and Buddhism, or more specifically, Bon and the Gelug-pa. This approach by the Bonpo monastics can also be observed in the subsequent ceremonies held by Menri monastery for the Dalai Lama. Similarly, on many of these occasions, especially when facing the Bonpo monks, the Dalai Lama consciously presented himself as a Buddhist monk, and the questions and discussions which he initiated with the Bonpo monks focused on the differences between their religious 'traditions.'

As soon as the Dalai Lama landed in Solan, a few of the laity who had accompanied the monks to Solan, made phone calls back to Dolanji informing the settlement that the Dalai Lama was about to arrive. In Dolanji, the laity, the students, and foreigners had been gathered around the settlement gate for about two to three hours. Each person had prepared a silk scarf and some elders had also brought incense. The lay adults, dressed in their regional clothes, were sitting on the stones and chatting with each other. Some small boys were running up and down, playing with their silk scarves with friends, and fighting with each other. A school band, made up of students dressed in school uniform, lined up before the gate with their drums and bamboo flutes. As the Dalai Lama's car approached an Indian village near Dolanji, another phone call came, and people began to line up along the road. Several lay men carried juniper leaves to either side of the gate, and a fire was set using the leaves, the smoke indented to purify the path for the Dalai Lama. People took out their silk scarves and laid them out over both hands. As the cars approached, the school band started to play, and some of the elders began to light the incense. As cars passed by, all of the onlookers bowed with their hands folder in prayer form. The Dalai Lama's car went up to the monastic complex, where he was received and welcomed by the Abbot and the monks of Menri monastery.

The Long Life Ritual (brtan bzhugs)

On the day after the Dalai Lama had arrived, the monks of Menri monastery offered a long life ritual (*brtan bzhugs*) for the benefit of all sentient beings. According to the monks, this ritual was offered "in the Bonpo way." Gelek, who had studied at the Menri dialectic school for over 10 years, explained to me that in this ritual, they offered '*Bonpo prayers and a Bonpo mandala*'[51] to the Dalai Lama. During the long life ritual, the Dalai Lama wore the Bon lotus hat (*pad zhu*) offered by the Abbot and held the sceptre of Tonpa Shenrab (see Plate 13). In terms of the Bonpo monks, their offering of the lotus hat to the Dalai Lama was meant to show their highest respect to him according to 'the Bon tradition.' In the Bon religion, the lotus hat is regarded as having been worn by Tonpa Shenrab for the first time when he renounced the world and became a monk. This tradition has been continued in Bonpo monasteries, and the

[51] As mentioned in Chapter II, in the Buddhist and Bonpo contexts, the *mandala* represents the residence of the deities, a sacred landscape in circular form. However, the details of the *mandala* in Buddhism and Bon are different because their deities are different. What Gelek mentioned here as 'a Bonpo *mandala*' referred to a *mandala* on which the deities of the Bon religion are presented.

hat is worn by fully ordained monks (who have taken 250 vows). The Bonpo monastics emphasised that the lotus hat represented the highest authority of religious practice in the Bon religion. According to them, their offering of the Bon lotus hat to the Dalai Lama was not only a gesture of respect on behalf of the Bon religion, but also demonstrated that the Bonpo monastics recognised the religious authority of the Dalai Lama. Many Bonpo monks told me that, when observing the way the Dalai Lama participated in the Bon rituals, they felt that the Dalai Lama "*understood and appreciated (our) Bon religion from his heart*," and, "*is a truly high lama [the spiritual master]*." This same scene, of the Dalai Lama wearing the Bon lotus hat and holding the sceptre of Tonpa Shenrab, also occurred two decades ago when he first visited Dolanji. Karmay (1998) in his article on the Bonpo community in exile, points out that this gesture represents a revival of the relationship between Bon and Buddhism, which prior to this had only occurred under the fifth Dalai Lama (1998: 536).[52] However, as Karmay has noted, this gesture by the Dalai Lama in Menri monastery, dismayed many "extreme purists" among his followers (*ibid.*).

In Chapter III I discussed the role of ritual in revealing and resolving contradictions in people's social experiences. The same aspects can also be observed in this long life ceremony, which, in my opinion, reflected the intention of both sides to resolve the contested relationship between Bon and Buddhism. By offering the Dalai Lama the Bon lotus hat, the Bonpo monastics represented to the Bon public and to Buddhist followers, that the Bonpo too regarded the Dalai Lama as an important spiritual master. This performance simultaneously reaffirmed the important religious and political leadership of the Dalai Lama to the Bonpo community. On the other hand, by accepting the Bon lotus hat, the Dalai Lama not only demonstrated his acceptance and recognition of 'the Bon traditions,' but also transformed himself into a leading master for the Bonpo monastics. This presentation was of crucial significance for both the Bonpo and the Dalai Lama, because it re-affirmed the close bond between their denominations, upon which a shared cultural experience and national identity was able to take shape and manifest. A Khu Wangdu, who also participated in this long life ceremony, explained his feelings when he saw the Dalai Lama wearing the Bon lotus hat:

[52] According to the Bonpo monastics (see also Karmay 1998), except for the current fourteenth Dalai Lama, the fifth Dalai Lama was the only Dalai Lama who formally recognised the Bon religion.

"*This is what we mean by a true lama. He would not say only his religion is good and others are bad. He would accept different opinions. This makes us respect him very much*".

The Opening Ceremony of the Tibetan Yung Drung Bon Library

The opening ceremony for the Library was held on the third day, and a consecration ritual (*rab gnas*) was performed. This ritual was performed by the Bonpo monks with the Dalai Lama, and attended by some Bonpo laity, a few Tibetan Buddhists, and the Western sponsors of the Library. For many laity and Bonpo monks, what they remembered most from this ritual was that the Dalai Lama 'learnt' from the Abbot how to use the Bonpo hand bell (Plate 14). In Bon monasteries, monks use flat upturned hand bells (*sil snyan*) in their rituals (Bellezza 2005: 419-423; Canzio 1986), while Buddhist monastics use a different type of bell, called a dril-bu (*dril bu*), which is held with the bell mouth facing down (Helffer 1985). According to the Bonpo, although Bon and Buddhism share many similarities in the way they hold their rituals, it is always easy to distinguish between them by observing the type of bell they use in the rituals. Ponlop Rinpoche recalled, "*In the consecration ritual the Dalai Lama used a Bonpo bell. He told us he had never used one before, and that it was difficult for him*."

Many of my monastic informants remarked that, the Dalai Lama not only 'noted' that the ritual bells used by Bon and Buddhism were different, but he also insisted on learning how to use the Bonpo bell, and tried to use it during the ritual. The Dalai Lama's reactions and behaviour, in this instance, impressed many of the Bonpos. Some of the monks pointed out that the use of different bells represented an important difference between the Bon and Buddhist traditions, and therefore, for many Bon and Buddhist monks, to cross this line was difficult. As Jinpa, a junior monk in his twenties, emphasised,

"*Many high Buddhist lamas would never do this. Some of them may show their interest in the religious differences between Bon and Buddhism, but they would never want to participate to discover more. So what the Dalai Lama did really touched my heart*."

The news that the Dalai Lama had used the Bonpo bell was spread quickly among the laity, by those who had attended the consecration ritual. They shared what they

had witnessed with their families and neighbours, about how the Dalai Lama had struggled to use the Bonpo bell, and expressed their admiration for the way the Dalai Lama had shown his appreciation of their Bon religion.

From my perspective, the Dalai Lama's recognition of the differences between Bon and Buddhism, in respect of the ritual bells used, is one example among many of the negotiation of religious boundaries evident throughout the visit. From the outset of his arrival in Solan, the Bonpo monastics presented aspects of their religious tradition, which the Dalai Lama was invited to engage with in terms of the differences between Bon and Buddhism, including the core colours of Bon, the Bon prayers, the Bonpo *mandala*, the Bon lotus hat, the sceptre of the founder of Bon, the texts, and the types of bell used by Bonpo. These distinctions may indicate that the differences between Bon and Buddhism are rather subtle, and that the boundaries between them can be blurred easily, particularly from the perspective of the laity. However, as noted, for Bon and Buddhist monastics, the meanings these distinctions imply are usually much more profound than they appear to be. As discussed in the previous chapters, Bon and Buddhist monastics had debated their respective religious authenticity for centuries (Bjerken 2001, Karmay 1972, 1998; Kværne 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2002a, 2002b; Snellgrove 1967). In these debates, Buddhist monks had accused the Bonpo of being plagiarists, asserting that their religion was merely a poor facsimile of Buddhism, and refusing to accept the distinctive aspects of the Bon tradition. In response to these debates, the Bonpo monastics expressed their intention to emphasise the distinctive character of 'the Bon traditions' to the Dalai Lama, and to examine his response to the subtle but significant differences between their religions.

As can be seen, in the rituals, the Dalai Lama showed his awareness of the differences between Bon and Buddhism, and responded to them with respect, understanding and even participation. These attitudes, embodied in the Dalai Lama, were crucially important to the Bonpo monks, because it showed recognition of the differences between the Bon religion and Buddhism, by one of the leading Buddhist masters of the day. However, as will be discussed in the next section, when it came to the formal speeches, which would be represented in the newspapers and on TV programmes throughout the Tibetan settlements, the attitude of the Dalai Lama to the relationship between Bon and Buddhism became cautious, and sometimes, hesitant.

Three Statements Made by the Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama gave three speeches during his visit, the first of which was addressed to the Bonpo monks at the end of the long life ritual. The second was given in the opening ceremony for the Library. The final statement, which was made after the opening ceremony had finished, was to the entire population of the settlement. It is important to note that the way the Dalai Lama presented himself in these three speeches was slightly different in accordance to his audiences. In the speech to the Bonpo monks, the Dalai Lama was very cautious in phrasing his terms. Instead of declaring what the Bon religion should be, and what he, as one of the denominational heads of Buddhism thought the Bon religion was, the Dalai Lama tended not to make any straightforward statements, instead leaving room for interpretation for both Bon and Buddhist monastics. However, in the other two statements, the Dalai Lama clearly presented himself as the head of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and concentrated on the equal importance of Bon and Buddhism in representing Tibetan culture. Before we discuss the first speech, it is necessary to introduce some of the philosophical terms which appear in the statement. Given that this speech was addressed specifically to the Bonpo monks, the Dalai Lama drew upon a number of philosophical terms in order to describe the positioning of Bon and Buddhism in Tibetan society.

A Brief Discussion of the Terms 'mu stegs pa', 'nang pa', and 'phyi pa'

Cech (1987, 1993) translates the term '*mu stegs pa'* as 'a heretical religion.' However, some of my informants from Menri monastery disagreed with this translation. According to them, '*mu stegs pa'* in Tibetan does not contain a negative meaning such as the term 'heretical' may imply. This Tibetan term is a translation from the Sanskrit *tīrthika*, and refers to those religions which do not believe in the Three Jewels or the Triple Gem (*dkon mchog gsum*). The Three Jewels are Buddha (*sangs rgyas*, the Enlightened Ones), Dharma (*bon/chos*, the teachings of the Enlightened Ones), and Sangha (*dge 'dun*, the monastic community) (Thar 2000: 425). It is important to note that the concept of the Three Jewels is shared by both the Bon religion and Buddhism. Both of these two religions believe that taking refuge in the Three Jewels is the only path to liberation from the cycle of rebirth (*samsara*, Samuel 1993a: 13). However, within the shared concept of the Three Jewels, Bon and

Buddhism differ on the identity of the Buddha and the teachings that they follow. While the Bonpo believe in Tonpa Shenras as the Buddha, and follow his teachings, followers of four Buddhist denominations believe that Shakyamuni is the Buddha, and they follow his teachings. Therefore, when these differences are emphasised, the boundary between Bon and Buddhism is manifested. However, when the general similarities between their interpretations of the Three Jewels are emphasised, the boundary between Bon and Buddhism can be overlooked or dismissed (Bjerken 2001; Cech 1987, 1993; Kværne 1972; Thar 2000: 425-426).

The flexibility in boundaries, however, affects the way the concepts of Insiders (*nang pa*) and Outsiders (*phyi pa*) are defined (see also Ramble 1997: 398; Kværne 1972: 23-24). When the Bonpo and Buddhists limit the concept of *nang pa* to followers of the same descent, they usually apply the term '*phyi pa'* to each other (Kværne 1972: 23-24). However, when *nang pa* is interpreted and understood as referring to those who believe in Three Jewels, it includes both Bonpos and Buddhists at the same time. Given that, historically, Buddhists have formed the majority within Tibetan societies, the term *nang pa* has more often been used to designate the followers of the four Buddhist denominations, and is sometimes translated into English as 'Buddhist', whilst the Bonpo are sometimes categorised as *phyi pa* or *mu stegs pa*, or left undefined (Bjerken 2001; Cech 1987, 1993; Lopez 1998).

The use of *nang pa* and *phyi pa* as concepts became increasingly problematic with the establishment of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, leading, over the 1960s and 1970s, to the effective exclusion of the Bon religion. It is believed by the Bonpo in Dolanji that the reason that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile excluded the Bonpo from the Parliament-in-Exile in 1960 was because its leadership applied the Buddhist concept of *nang pa* in order to decide who were included and who were not. Therefore, as well as working to include 'the Bon traditions' in the official national discourse, Bonpo monastics had also to engage in debate with Buddhists about the definition of *nang pa* and *phyi pa*. As emphasised by the Bonpo monks, the Bon religion certainly fell into the category of *nang pa* given that Bon and Buddhism shared the same belief in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha (see also Kværne 1972: 23-24). In their terms, *nang pa* should be broadly defined as '*believers of Buddha-hood'*, which includes both the followers of Tonpa Shenrab and Shakyamuni. This emphasis of the Bonpo monks, as will be argued, adds another aspect of

ambiguity into the relationship between Bon and Buddhism, and again indicates that the boundary between these two traditions is negotiable and often flexible.

The inclusion of the Bon religion in the Parliament-in-Exile in 1977 was therefore regarded by the Bonpo as proof that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had finally accepted them as *nang pa*, having accepted that they shared the same general religious view as Buddhism, and as such, that their religious identity was in accord with Tibetan national identity. As many Bonpo monks remarked, it was only based upon the notion of *nang pa* that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile could accept the Bon religion without raising arguments from other religious minorities, such as Tibetan Muslims and Christians. As Gyatso emphasised,

> *"If the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was not structured by the concept of 'nang pa,' I am sure the Christians and Muslims would say that they should have representatives in parliament too."*

However, among Buddhists, opinions about the definition of *nang pa* and about whether the Bonpo should be included in this concept remain the topic of much debate. I suggest that these disputes among Buddhist monastics may have affected the way the Dalai Lama presented his perspectives in public to the Bonpo monks in 2007. As will be seen, in contrast to his performance and engagement in the rituals, the Dalai Lama was rather careful in his statement, and avoided offering any definitions which may cause disputes between Bonpo and Buddhist monks, over the definition of *mu stegs pa, nang pa,* and *phyi pa*. The caution displayed by the Dalai Lama is representative of the relationship between the Bon and Buddhist denominations, which, to a certain extent, are still contested, and toward which the Dalai Lama intends to maintain the traditional viewpoint of his predecessors.

"I never said Bon is mu stegs pa"

> *"Recently, some people said that Gyalwa Rinpoche [the Dalai Lama] said the Bonpo were not nang pa. I have never said that Bonpo are mu stegs pa. Tibetan scholars in the past had a traditional saying that Bon was neither nang pa nor mu stegs pa. mu stegs pa refers to those following a different religion to nang pa in early India. The reason that followers of those*

religions were designated as mu stegs pa, was that they believed in the existence of gang zag gi bdag [the self of the person]".[53]

This excerpt is from the speech the Dalai Lama gave at the end of the long life ritual. I do not intend to go into detail about the philosophical theories the Dalai Lama addressed in his speech, given that they involved the complex doctrinal and religious histories of Bon and Buddhism. My main focus here is to examine the way the Dalai Lama represented his perspective and phrased the terms in his speech. These remarks reflect the Dalai Lama's struggle to maintain his role as a denominational head alongside his position as the political leader of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Given that the audience for this speech was exclusively composed of Bonpo monks, it can be seen that the Dalai Lama intended to present himself as a Buddhist monastic and to maintain a certain amount of hesitancy when describing the Bon religion. However, at the same time, given his leadership role in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the Dalai Lama also intended to maintain the unity of the Tibetan national identity, rather than encourage religious dispute between Bonpo and Buddhists. As a result, his statements were mainly indirect and ambiguous, seeming to represent both sides, and he carefully avoided making any statements against either Bon or his own denomination.

In this address, the Dalai Lama emphasised that he had never regarded the Bon religion as *mu stegs pa*, which I translate here as 'a religion of non-Buddhist view.' As mentioned, the notion of 'non-Buddhist view' can refer to any religion which generally does not believe in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. According to this definition, neither Bon nor Buddhism belongs as *mu stegs pa*. However, 'non-Buddhist view' can also to some degree refer to those religions which do not follow the teachings of Shakyamuni, and in this respect, the Bonpo could be possibly considered to be *mu stegs pa* by some Buddhists. In his speech, the Dalai Lama stated that he did not regard the Bonpo as *mu stegs pa*, which would suggest that he

[53] This paragraph was translated with the help of Geshe Gelek and Gyatso from Menri monastery. The original speech has been published in the magazine '*Shes Bya: Periodical News of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile*' (2007), Dharamsala. Given that this speech was very long and contains a large amount of philosophical knowledge, with references to both Bon and Buddhist texts, I found it very difficult to translate, even with the help of the Bonpo monastics. I understand that a partial presentation of the speech may neglect aspects which the full text seeks to address. However, given that the discussion here has drawn upon the opinions of the Bonpo monks in relation to the speech, I believe that the overall context has been well considered and addressed. Nevertheless, if mistakes and misunderstandings are found in respect of this representation, I take full responsibility for them.

places Bon and Buddhism in the same category, namely, *nang pa*, as traditions which both believe in the Three Jewels.

However, it is interesting to note that, while distancing the Bon religion from the category of '*mu stegs pa*,' the Dalai Lama simultaneously places Bon in another dilemma. In his subsequent remarks he pointed out that some Tibetan scholars had regarded the Bonpo as neither *nang pa* nor *mu stegs pa*. What did this mean? The Dalai Lama did not provide further explanation in this regard, nor did he confirm whether or not he considered the Bonpo to be *nang pa*. In this context, 'Tibetan scholars' can be understood to be those Buddhist monastics and historians who regarded '*nang pa*' as pertaining exclusively to those who believed in the teachings of Shakyamuni. However, it seems that the Dalai Lama did not intend to clarify the exact nature of the Bon religion in this statement, nor did he want to add his own opinion. The Dalai Lama went on to fully define the meaning of '*mu stegs pa*', but left the term '*nang pa*' undefined. This strategy explicitly excluded both Bonpo and Buddhists from the category of '*mu stegs pa*,' whilst simultaneously opening up a space for interpretation of the concept of '*nang pa*.'

Many Bonpo monks seemed satisfied with the statement made by the Dalai Lama. According to them, the Dalai Lama had made it clear enough that he believed the Bonpo were '*nang pa*,' although he did not make this definition straightforward. From the perspective of the Bonpo monks, the Dalai Lama's definition of '*mu stegs pa*' had delivered the clear message that he understood the Bonpo, and that through their adherence to Tonpa Shenrab (the Enlightened One), they shared the same view of the Three Jewels as his own denomination (the Gelug-pa). However, the Dalai Lama's statements can also be interpreted from a different perspective by the Buddhists, who limited the concept of '*nang pa*' to the followers of Shakyamuni and therefore excluded the Bonpo from this category. For these Buddhists, the statements did not contradict their perspective either, given that the Dalai Lama did not clearly state that the Bonpo were '*nang pa.*' In this way, the Dalai Lama reflected and maintained his dual leadership of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and his denomination. As the head of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, he demonstrated that he did not exclude the Bonpo's religious identity from Tibetan national identity, which incorporated all those religious traditions deemed to be '*nang pa.*' On the other hand, as the leader of the Gelug-pa, of which some followers regarded the

Bonpo as Outsiders (*phyi pa*), the Dalai Lama also represented himself as maintaining the traditional view of his own denomination.

The way in which the Dalai Lama represented the Bon religion in this speech may be considered to be highly political and deliberately ambiguous. However, this speech also represented the ambiguities embedded in the relationship between Bon and Buddhism. I suggest that it is because of these ambiguities that the boundaries between Bon and Buddhism become negotiable and flexible. By making use of this inherent flexibility, the Bonpo have represented their right to be in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and negotiated to modify the marginality placed on them by the discourse of Tibetan nationalism. From the perspective of the Dalai Lama and the Government-in-Exile, it is also in terms of these ambiguities in marking the boundaries between Bon and Buddhism, that the acceptance of the Bon religion in the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile became possible. As noted, among the Tibetan refugees, there are also a number of Christians and Muslims, who are minorities in terms of their own religious identities. Whilst Bon has been accepted by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile for over three decades, the religious identities of Christians and Muslims have yet to be formally recognised. As Bonpo monks have suggested, the reason the Christian and Muslim populations face difficulties in negotiating for the recognition of their religious identities in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile is that they, unlike the Bonpo, have almost no space to negotiate their religious positions in terms of the concept of '*nang pa*.'

"Bon is Our Native Religion"

In the opening ceremony for the Library, the Dalai Lama again addressed the content of his speech to his audience, which included the Bonpo monks, a few Bonpo lay adults (including settlers of Dolanji and those who had come from other settlements in India, Nepal, and other foreign countries), and many Western sponsors. In his address, the Dalai Lama stated (see full text in Appendix C),

> *"Our main responsibility, during our time in exile, is to protect Yungdrung Bon, which existed in our ancestors' time in Tibet. The Bon religion is our native religion [pha ma'i chos]. If we need to find the history of Tibet, it can be found only in the Bon texts. We cannot find it in Buddhist texts. That is why the Bon religion is very important for us. So make efforts to preserve your religion".*

We find that in this speech, the Dalai Lama firmly presented his recognition of the importance of 'the Bon traditions.' He remarked that the contribution of the Bon religion to Tibetan history and culture was crucial and could not be replaced by Buddhism. In the statement, the Dalai Lama referred to Bon as *pama chos (pha ma'i chos)*, which can be directly translated as 'the religion of Tibetans' ancestors.' '*Pama*' means parents, and '*chos*' refers to religion. By designating Bon as *pama chos*, the Dalai Lama indicated that the Bon religion had developed for a long time in Tibetan society. Moreover, reflecting on his words, '*if we need to find the history of Tibet, it can be found only in the Bon texts*,' it appears that the Dalai Lama is recognising the fact that Bon had existed in Tibetan society prior to Buddhism. As discussed in Chapter II, this fact had been emphasised by Bonpo monastics from 1960 onwards, in order to negotiate for their religious position in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Therefore, the Dalai Lama's recognition of this perspective seems to represent a response to the struggles of the Bonpo.

However, I suggest that these statements should also be considered as consciously addressing the concerns of Western audiences, including those Westerners who were also Bon practitioners and were the main sponsors for the establishment of the library. It can be seen from this speech that the Dalai Lama's attitude toward the position of Bon in Tibetan society was no longer cautious. Instead, his statements were straightforward, stressing that Bon, differentiated from Buddhism, represented a very important part of Tibetan history and culture. Although he did not clearly identify the particular era of Tibetan history to which Bon could lay exclusive claim, his statements nevertheless positioned the Bon religion in equal terms to Buddhism in terms of their contributions to Tibetan history. Some Bonpo monks explained that this '*friendly*' attitude of the Dalai Lama toward the Bon religion was due to the support given by foreigners for the development of Bon. According to the Bonpo monks, such as Yung Drung and Geshe Gelek, the increase in foreign followers of Bon and the development of Western academic interest in the Bon religion, has significantly changed the attitude of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile toward the Bonpo over the past decades (see also Bjerken 2001; Cech 1987; Karmay 1998; Thargyal 2001). Some monks stressed that, it was due to the increase in interest from Western scholars toward the Bon religion, from the 1960s-1970s onwards (roughly from 1967 when Snellgrove published his translation of a Bon text with the help of Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Karmay), that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was

compelled to incorporate Bon in its administration in order to gain more support from foreign scholars and sponsors on the issue of Tibet.

So far, we find that the negotiations between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (in which Buddhists are dominant) from 1960 have addressed a number of aspects, including the administration of the settlement, interactions with Indian authorities (Chapter I), the discourse of 'traditions' (Chapter II), a shared memory of the past, the interactions with the Chinese Government (Chapter III), and, as this chapter has examined, the concepts of *nang pa*, and the relationship with foreign scholars and sponsors. These negotiations, as indicated, are built upon a series of 'dialogues', in which old narratives and perspectives are in continuous communication with new elements, which appear with social change and the development of new affiliations.

"The more efforts we make for Tibet, the more merit we will accumulate"

The Dalai Lama's final speech was addressed to the entire population of Dolanji. This speech was delivered in the courtyard of the monastery temple. The Dalai Lama sat in the corridor above the stairs, surrounded by the monks. Next to the Dalai Lama were the Abbot and Ponlop Rinpoche. Indian police stood around the courtyard, and Tibetan body guards stood near the Dalai Lama with the monks. In front of the Dalai Lama, in the courtyard, were the students of the CST Dolanji, who sat in lines in front of the lay audience. Behind the students were the lay adults and some Westerners. The students and everyone among the lay audience folded their hands during the speech made by the Dalai Lama. This speech was delivered to mark the end of his visit, and therefore, it seemed to represent a conclusion to the events. In his speech (see Appendix C for full text), the Dalai Lama remarked,

> *"On my visit this time, I found that the monastery has improved greatly, not only in terms of its buildings and architecture, but also in the monastic education it offers. [……]Regarding the school, it seems that all is well in terms of the report given by the settlement representative. I am pleased to see that you have all been working hard to improve conditions in the settlement, and that many sponsors have also been involved with this task. The most important thing you should all bear in mind is to build a good relationship with the local Indians and officials. [……]"*

"At this critical time for Tibetans living in exile, the fate of Tibet is associated with the Tibetan religions, which provide the path for ultimate liberation. No matter whether you are Buddhist [sangye chos] or Yungdrung Bon, we all believe in the same processes [of compassion and the five paths] which lead to ultimate liberation. The fate of Tibet will be decided by the energy with which we practice our faith. Therefore, we should apply the same mind and faith in working towards saving Tibet. The more effort we make for Tibet, the more merit we will accumulate. [……] We are very rich in culture. The religious philosophy of Yungdrung Bon, akin to Buddhism [sangye pa'i chos], is vast and deep. However, in terms of the development of modern education, we are still very much behind. Building schools has been our top priority since we arrived in exile in 1959. So, go to school [pointing to the students]! "

From these accounts, we can see that the Dalai Lama presented himself directly and clearly as the head of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. He approved of the progress made by Menri monastery, the CST Dolanji, and the settlement over the past two decades. In addition, he reminded the settlers how important it was to foster a friendly relationship with Indian locals and officials. Compared to the previous two speeches, which represented a focus on the religious and historical positioning of the Bon religion, in this final speech the Dalai Lama emphasised the refugee perspective and the issue of Tibet.

About half of the audience for this speech belonged to the second and third generations, many of them were still students. When addressing these younger generations, the Dalai Lama stressed the importance of school education. In this speech, we find that instead of separating Bon from Buddhism, the Dalai Lama emphasised that Bon and Buddhism shared identical religious views and practices. By highlighting their general similarities, he dismissed the boundaries between the Bonpo and Buddhists, and told the Bonpo, particularly the younger generation, that they shared equal responsibility with other Tibetans for the issue of Tibet. In so doing, the Dalai Lama re-affirmed the importance of national identity as opposed to religious disputes which may exist between Bon and Buddhism. Additionally, he reminded the Bonpo that their efforts toward their religious identity should not be separated from the national context, given that these two were interconnected and would benefit simultaneously from each other.

Although during his visit the Dalai Lama had been obliged to provide some comment on the differences between Bon and Buddhism, at various points during his stay in Dolanji, he had concluded his visit by reminding the Bonpo that there was a shared similarity which lay behind their apparent religious differences, and it was in this similarity that Bonpos and Buddhists shared the same historical cause and had equal responsibility to work for the future of Tibet within their respective religious traditions. The visit of the Dalai Lama came to an end with this speech, and Dolanji soon returned to normal after the large crowds of visitors had left. However, the impact of this event continued, and even one to two months later, monks and settlers were still discussing what the Dalai Lama had said and done during his visit.

In the monastery, I was told by some junior monks (most of them were in their twenties) that a tree on their debating ground, which had been planted by the Dalai Lama in 1988, had begun to grow leaves just prior to the Dalai Lama's return visit. According to the monks, the tree had been without leaves for a long time and they were worried that it might die before the Dalai Lama could return. They expressed their surprise that the tree was full of green leaves when the Dalai Lama arrived: "*We said that maybe it knew the Dalai Lama was coming back and wanted to welcome him*". Inside the main temple, the throne that the Dalai Lama had occupied was kept in place for a few months, with his photo placed on it. Not long after the Dalai Lama had left, with the request of the laity, the Abbot agreed to allow settlers to visit the rooms in which he had stayed, located at the top of the main temple. Inside the rooms, the adult settlers prostrated towards the chairs and bed which the Dalai Lama had used, and placed their foreheads against the bed and table in order to receive his blessings.

In school, the students told me many times about the dances they had performed in front of the Dalai Lama, saying, '*Dalai Lama was very happy to see our performances. He told us he was surprised to see that we performed the traditional dances so well.*' Some told me that they would study hard from now on, because this was the Dalai Lama's wish. The girls showed me several pieces which they had cut from the Indian newspapers, including local news coverage of the Dalai Lama's visit to Dolanji, and photos featuring the Dalai Lama with the Abbot. They had carefully stuck these articles on the wall next to their beds, and some had pasted them on their notebooks. As for the school teachers, some told me that the Dalai Lama's words

about education reminded them how important their jobs were. A few mentioned that they hoped the visit of the Dalai Lama would help to draw the attention of the Department of Education to the CST Dolanji which, according to them, needed more support in the development of school facilities.

The enduring interest expressed by settlers in the Dalai Lama's visit, reflects the significance of this event to the population of Dolanji. It also leads us to consider how settlers of different ages engaged with the statements made by the Dalai Lama, and his argument that religious and national identities were mutually dependent on one another. As discussed in the previous chapters, the laity of different generations, who have had different experiences of life in exile, and some of whom have not had access to modern education, represent a diverse range of perspectives on religious and national identity. Did their experiences of religious and national identity affect the way they interpreted the statements of the Dalai Lama, and the significance of his visit? Moreover, did the Dalai Lama's visit change, or reaffirm their perspectives on the place of the Bon religion and its position in terms of Tibetan national identity?

Responses from the Bonpo Laity

This next part will discuss the remarks made by the Bonpo laity in response to the Dalai Lama's visit. The analysis will focus on the accounts expressed by three laymen: Gyaltsen, Karma, and Sangpo, whose experiences of the visit of the Dalai Lama vary in terms of their generation, their personal histories, and also, their educational background. It should be noted that what is reflected in these three cases can also be applied to other Bonpos of the same generation, similar educational background, and similar experience in exile. The aim of this section is to examine how the laity's understanding of their Bon identity and their national identity are manifested, by being challenged, contested, or reaffirmed, in their experience of the visit of the Dalai Lama.

Gyaltsen and Karma

Both Gyaltsen and Karma were born in Dolanji, and at the time when this research was conducted, they were both in their late twenties. Gyaltsen had lived in Dharamsala for many years, and had just moved back to Dolanji in February 2007. He had studied in one of the Tibetan schools in Dharamsala since he was very young.

According to Gyaltsen, his parents sent him to Dharamsala for study because they thought the schools there provided a better quality of education. As he said,

> *"At that time [in the 1980s], the school in Dolanji was not much developed, and there were not many teachers. However, the schools in Dharamsala were different. They were in the centre. The Tibetan Government was there, so schools there had the best teachers and best facilities."*

In Dharamsala, Gyaltsen finished his eighth grade, and had tried to set up a business with his friends, but failed. He married a girl who was also from Dolanji, and moved back to Dolanji. During my stay in Dolanji, I often saw Gyaltsen in the settlement, helping his parents to run the grocery shop.

Gyaltsen was very excited about the visit of the Dalai Lama. When the Dalai Lama was in Dolanji, he was always around the monastery. Gyaltsen rarely participated in the annual ceremonies held in Menri monastery. He usually said, "*I don't like to go to the monastery. I don't know why. I just don't feel comfortable there.*" However, it is interesting to note that he actively participated in the ceremonies throughout the visit of the Dalai Lama. He attended almost every ritual the monastery held for the Dalai Lama, and helped to maintain order in the crowd. During the Dalai Lama's visit, Gyaltsen and seven other laymen were appointed by the settlement office to guard the temple at night. As he recalled,

> *"The Dalai Lama stayed in the top room of the main temple, and our job was to walk around the temple to check if any suspicious persons were nearby. We divided into two groups and circumambulated the temple in turn until the sun rose. I got very little sleep on those nights. However I could not have felt more honoured to be guarding the Dalai Lama."*

Gyaltsen emphasised that the visit of the Dalai Lama was important because it provided the settlers with a chance to get close to the spiritual leader of Tibetans in exile. He pointed out that he had received the blessing of the Dalai Lama several times during his study in Dharamsala. Few in Dolanji, had been so lucky, he pointed out, and that was why they were so excited. In contrast to Gyaltsen's excitement, Karma, who was two years older, experienced a sense of tension during the Dalai Lama's visit, and had a different opinion on the significance of the event.

Karma was working in the settlement office as a secretary. He and the settlement representative were responsible for directing the preparations made by the settlers for the Dalai Lama's visit, cooperating with Menri monastery in order to ensure his security and the smooth running of the scheduled events. Karma recalled the sense of alert he had experienced during the Dalai Lama's stay, his worry that something unexpected might happen. Only after the visit had finished, was he able to relax. As he said, "*Now I can sleep for a whole day. No more tension. The people are gone, and the police are gone*." Replying to my question on how he felt about the visit of the Dalai Lama, Karma remarked,

> *"When I heard he was coming, I didn't have any special feelings. But now I feel very proud that he regards the Bon religion as a native religion of Tibet [pha ma'i chos]. I am very proud of being Bonpo and I think that, after his visit, Buddhists will also feel positively about the Bon religion because the Dalai Lama has shown how much he appreciates the Bonpo".*

For Karma, the statements made by the Dalai Lama delivered a significant message to Buddhists in the Tibetan refugee community, that the Bon religion was important, and that this importance was directly approved by the head of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Karma's response reflected the marginal position of the Bonpo in relation to the Buddhist majority, and expressed his expectation that this situation may change with the visit of the Dalai Lama. His response was different from Gyaltsen, who seemed not to focus on the struggles of the Bonpo within the Tibetan community. Both Gyaltsen and Karma agreed on the leading position occupied by the Dalai Lama in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. However, the meanings they associated with this leadership seemed to be slightly different. For Gyaltsen, the Dalai Lama is everything that Tibetan national identity is about. However, for Karma, the Dalai Lama's leadership is mostly manifested in his approval of the Bon religion. Both Gyaltsen and Karma belonged to the second generation, and were of similar age, so why did they have such different perceptions of the Dalai Lama's role as a leader? I suggest that it is due to their different experiences of religious and national identity. It may be that Gyaltsen has never experienced marginalisation as a Bonpo, at the hands of the Buddhist majority; Karma however, may have had direct experience of marginalisation.

Karma studied in the CST Dolanji until the eighth grade, and continued his studies at

the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS),[54] where he completed the Purva Madhyama courses (equivalent to the ninth and tenth Grades in the CST schools). In the late 1990s, having contracted tuberculosis, Karma dropped out of the CIHTS and returned to Dolanji in order to recover. For several years, he had helped his parents with their sweater making business, working all over the Tibetan settlements in India, and in 2005, he was elected to be the secretary of the settlement office.

Karma recalled that, when he was studying at the CIHTS, he and other Bonpos were often discriminated against by their Buddhist classmates, who refused to eat with them at the same table. This can probably be attributed to the fact that, at the CIHTS, although students of the same year attend courses on Tibetan and Sanskrit together, they are divided into subgroups in terms of their denominational affiliations when it comes to religious philosophy. Therefore, the Bonpo would learn Bon philosophy (Bon Sampradaya) from the Bonpo monks, and students of the Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu, and Gelug sections would learn the philosophies of their own denominational traditions. The main purpose of this division is to provide students with advanced and specialised knowledge of their denomination while also avoiding inter-denominational conflicts. However, as pointed out by Karma and Gyatso, a teacher of Bon philosophy in the CIHTS, given that the differences between Bonpos and Buddhists were easily recognised, it indirectly encouraged Buddhist students to marginalise the Bonpo. This was especially true in the 1990s, a time in which some Buddhist students had never heard about Bon,[55] and some regarded Bon as a religion which went against Buddhist values.

According to Karma and other settlers who had studied in the CIHTS in the 1990s,

[54] The CIHTS was founded by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in 1967 as a teaching and research institution. Unlike the CST schools which provide students with general courses on science, mathematics, Tibetan history, and Tibetan/English/Hindi languages, CIHTS provides courses on Tibetan, Sanskrit, literature, and philosophies of different religious traditions. Students have to pass an entrance exam to study at the CIHTS. When they take the entrance exam, they have to state on their application forms which branch they are going to enrol at, and are grouped into six sections: Bon, Nyingma-pa, Sakya-pa, Kagyu-pa, Gelug-pa, and a branch of Tibetan medicine and astrology. When the CIHTS was established, there was no Bon branch. It was not until 1990, with the request of the Dalai Lama, that Bon was added.

[55] Dhargye, one year senior to Karma at the CIHTS, remembered that his Buddhist classmates used to mistake the term '*bon po*' for '*phu mo*', which means 'the girls'. When the Buddhists heard that there were five new 'Bonpo' students going to join their class, they thought they were five 'girls'. Therefore, they were surprised when they saw five 'boys' appear in their class. According to Dhargye, this example illustrates how 'little' the Buddhists knew about the Bonpo in the 1990s.

some of their Buddhist classmates called them Outsiders (*phyi pa*), which was applied to those who did not believe in Buddha-hood. As a result, the Bonpo were compelled to argue about what the Bon religion was, and why Bon and Buddhism should be considered as equally important to Tibetan national identity. Some Bonpos described these years as '*a difficult time*,' given that they had to argue with Buddhists all the time in order to fight for the recognition of their religious identity. A few also mentioned that the experience of those years in the CIHTS had made them particularly sensitive about the issue of Bon. Even nowadays, with the status of Bonpo in the Tibetan community much improved, they sometimes still feel hesitant to identify as Bonpo when introducing themselves to Buddhists. For these settlers, the visits of the Dalai Lama to Dolanji, both in 1988 and 2007, were vitally important, because the message he conveyed and the manner in which he treated the Bonpo, was a source of considerable support in representing their Bon identity in the face of Buddhist dominance and discrimination.

According to Karma, when he studied at the CIHTS, he and his Bonpo classmates often drew upon the Dalai Lama's recognition of the Bon religion, and in particular, his visit to Dolanji in 1988, to 'prove' the importance of Bon from the perspective of the Dalai Lama. This explains why many Bonpos, including those who had studied at the CIHTS in the 1990s and who had experienced marginalisation by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in the 1960s-1970s, evaluated the significance of the Dalai Lama's visit in accordance with how it would affect and improve the position of the Bonpo in the Tibetan community. Moreover, it should be noted that not only laity, but also monastics utilised the statements made by the Dalai Lama in order to validate the importance of Bon in Tibetan history and culture. As many Bonpo monks have admitted, without the Dalai Lama's efforts in persuading the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile to accept the Bon religion, and his emphasis on the equal importance of Bon and Buddhism in many of his public speeches, the voice of Bonpos would not have been heard, and their status in the Tibetan community in exile would not have improved as much as it has.

Unlike Karma, Gyaltsen has never experienced any contradiction between his religious and national identities. Gyaltsen had studied in Dharamsala, which, as he said, was the centre of the Tibetan community in exile. According to Gyaltsen, he never experienced the discrimination that Karma had when at school, and even

though there were few Bonpo in his school, nobody had enquired about or made an issue of his religious identity. This was probably because almost all the students in Gyaltsen's school were Buddhists and they had assumed that Gyaltsen was also from one of the four Buddhist denominations. Gyaltsen admitted that he did not know how to chant Bonpo prayers, which would have been learnt by the students studying in the CST Dolanji and the Bonpo in the CIHTS. Gyaltsen had only been taught Buddhist prayers in his school. Unlike Karma and those studying in the CIHTS in the early 1990s, Gyaltsen had never experienced being marginalised by other Tibetans in terms of his Bon identity. This may explain why he expressed no conflicting or ambiguous sentiments in his regard for the Dalai Lama, or in respect of the relationship between Bon and the Tibetan Government-in-exile. Gyaltsen had stayed for many years in Dharamsala, where the Tibetan national identity had always been an important part of everyday life for its residents, whilst denominational differences were usually downplayed.

In Dolanji, many people also shared the same view as Gyaltsen, who articulated the significance of the visit of the Dalai Lama in accordance with the connections between the Dalai Lama and Tibetan national identity. For them, the Dalai Lama represented Tibetan national identity, and therefore, his visit was meant to reaffirm the importance of national identity among the Tibetan exiles. Many of these people, such as Lumo and Dechen, were third generation and were students of the CST Dolanji. Akin to Gyaltsen, these young Bonpos had never experienced any contradiction between their religious identity and their Tibetan national identity. One of the main reasons for this is that they had spent most of their life so far in Dolanji, where the majority were Bonpo and where they did not have to negotiate any contradictions between their religious identity and Tibetan nationalism. Another reason is that, as will be discussed in the next chapter, in the past decade, the reform of school textbooks and the attitude of the Dalai Lama have made it clear to Tibetan refugees that Bon and Buddhism make an equally important contribution to Tibetan culture. Therefore, most of the Bonpo under the age of 25 have seldom experienced any marginalisation or discrimination in respect of their Bon identity, from other Tibetans in their school. This experience, in terms of textbook knowledge and school life, as will be discussed in Chapter VI, has in recent years significantly affected the way that young Bonpos understand their Bon identity.

Sangpo

Sangpo was born in Tibet in 1949. After his wife passed away, Sangpo came to Dolanji in the 1990s with his youngest son, who was about 3 years old. Sangpo had been working in Dolanji as a tailor making robes for the monks. At the time of my fieldwork, his son, who was about 12, was studying in Dharamsala. Akin to Gyaltsen's parents, Sangpo thought that the schools in Dharamsala were better run, and his son would be able to receive a better education there. However, although he agreed that the schools in Dharamsala were 'better' because they received more support from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, Sangpo's attitude to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was often one of suspicion. He sometimes accused the Tibetan Government-in-Exile of trying to persecute the Bonpo. Although he did participate in some ceremonies during the visit of the Dalai Lama, he expressed some complaints about the event after the Dalai Lama had left. As he said:

> *"I still don't like the Dalai Lama. He is not good. Ask many of the monks or lay people here, many of them don't like him either. He didn't like Bonpos before, and now he says he like us. Who would believe this? Some young people now start to say how good he is, and how good he said the Bonpo are. But for myself, I don't believe him".*

Sangpo also mentioned that conflict between the Bonpo and Buddhists still exists in some villages in Tibet today:

> *"Even now, in certain Bonpo villages, if you say you're a Buddhist or if you're travelling with a Buddhist, people won't let you stay in their houses. Similarly, in some Buddhist villages, if people knew you were a Bonpo, they wouldn't treat you well."*

It is difficult to know how serious the conflict between the Bonpo and Buddhists has been in Tibet, given that Sangpo was the only person in Dolanji who mentioned any conflict between the Bon and Buddhist laities in Tibet. In the recollection of most lay elders, there was no conflict between Bonpos and Buddhists prior to exile. However, it seems that some elders did share a similar view to Sangpo, about the Dalai Lama, although they would re-phrase it by emphasising that their complaints were in respect of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, rather than the Dalai Lama. These elders explained that the reason for their conflicted feelings about the Dalai Lama's visit

was because it reminded them of the 'bad' times they had experienced in the 1960s, just after they had fled to India. As discussed in Chapters I-III, in the 1960s-1970s when the Bonpo fled Tibet and re-located in India, they, akin to other Tibetan refugees, had to struggle to adjust to the natural, cultural and social environment of their host country. While the Buddhist majority had received support from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, in order to build a new life in exile, the Bonpo had been ignored and left out. As Karma's 65-years-old uncle, Kelsang, remembered, "*They [the Tibetan Government-in-Exile] only helped the Buddhists.*" According to Kelsang, these 'bad' memories of their struggles had made some elders 'distrust' the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. He pointed out that the complex feelings some settlers may have expressed toward the Dalai Lama should not be considered as personal critiques of the Dalai Lama, but rather, they were to do with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, which the Dalai Lama represented. In our conversations, Kelsang constantly stressed, "*We all respect the Dalai Lama as a great high lama*."

In brief, we find that the Dalai Lama's visit not only provided Bonpo monks with a chance to negotiate what they claimed as 'the Bon traditions,' but it also cast light on the ways the laity perceived their religious and national identity. For those who had never noted the contradictions between these two identities, the Dalai Lama's visit only reconfirmed the importance of national identity over religious diversity. However, for those who had experienced being excluded by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and who had struggled to resist the marginalisation of their religious identity, the visit of the Dalai Lama represented a confirmation of the importance of Bon in Tibetan national identity. These findings indicate that the concept of identity, which entails a recognition of the contrast between 'us' and 'them', is mostly developed from and reinforced via interactions with 'others'.

'Dialogical' Construction of Identities

In the chapters so far, I have argued that the Bonpo's negotiation for recognition of their religious identity is not a one-way process of self-defined inclusion or exclusion. Rather, it is constituted by a series of 'dialogues', in which the narratives of inclusion and exclusion from both the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, are continuously contested, negotiated, and modified in response to each other. As reflected in the visit of the Dalai Lama, the dialogue of negotiation is largely built on

the process of interaction, in which old narratives are directly challenged or reaffirmed and new understandings created, in order to adjust to the purposes of the moment. As can be seen, the purposes may change in terms of situations, and therefore, the ideas which are drawn upon to validate the purposes also change.

When we consider the visit of the Dalai Lama in 2007, we see that the interactions between the Bonpo leadership and the Dalai Lama sometimes sought to differentiate Bon from Buddhism, and sometimes sought to emphasise their similarities. In the process of negotiation, the old narratives, such as histories of Zhangzhung and the concepts of *nang pa* and *mu stegs pa* in Bon and Buddhist literature, were selectively represented in order to support what the Bonpo meant by 'the Bon traditions', and what the Dalai Lama intended to articulate in terms of the relationship between Bon and Buddhism. In addition to these older resources, we find that many new elements, for example, the context of exile, the relationship with Indian authorities, and the involvement of Westerners in the preservation and development of the Bon religion, were added via a number of new idioms and new perspectives in the process of negotiation. These processes of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction represent the fluid characteristic of identity (Cech 1987), and illustrate the fact that identity gains its meanings mostly from the interactions.

In his research into Muslim identity (Hui) in China, Gladney (1998) argues that the discourse of ethnic inclusion and exclusion involves constant internal and external negotiations of what is shared and what is not shared (1998: 120), and its representation usually varies in terms of the narrator and the audience. In China, the 'Muslim' groups, which were once diverse in terms of their locations and historical contexts, are now ascribed a single Hui identity by the state. Gladney found that, when articulating their Hui identity, people would sometimes refer to the criteria used by the state in respect of their ethnicity, but would also draw on traditional ways of distinguishing themselves and others. Therefore, instead of being supplanted by state representations, traditional ways of differentiation continually supplied meanings which were utilised by people in order to conceptualise their Hui identity. In this process, the resources provided by the locality and the state are in a continual negotiation with one another, and the concept of Hui identity is constantly redefined in terms of the immediate socio-political context. Gladney terms this process a 'dialogical interaction,' in order to stress the interconnection between multiple resources and the dynamics of the majority-minority relationship.

The case of Muslims in China may differ in various ways to the situation of the Bonpo in Dolanji. However, we find that the relationship between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile can only properly be understood in terms of this 'dialogical' process, in which different resources (including Bon and Buddhist literature, the international discourse of Tibetan identity, and foreign studies on the Bon religion) are in constant negotiation with one another, and from which the Bonpo ascribe and are ascribed their identity, and reject that which they are not. Unlike the Muslims in China, whose negotiation of their identity was largely limited within, and dominated by, state representations, the Bonpo in Dolanji have more space in which to utilise resources from across state boundaries, in order to challenge the ways in which their Bon identity is represented by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. However, it should be noted that the cross-border practices evident in the Bonpo negotiation of identity, indicate that the 'dialogical interaction' between the Bonpo in exile and the interlocutors of Tibetan national identity, is generated within and addressed mainly to a transnational context. In the next chapter, which focuses on schooling in order to understand the construction of Tibetan national identity, the official discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile will be further explored.

Conclusion

This chapter argues that the 'dialogues' which had existed between the Bonpo, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and the Buddhist monastics, were re-examined and reaffirmed through the visit of the Dalai Lama to Dolanji in 2007. I have argued that identity, whether in terms of regional, religious, or national identity, is often manifested when it is in communication with 'others,' to whom it responds in addressing issues of similarity and difference. Therefore, the question of who the Bonpo are and what their 'Bon traditions' are, can only be approached when they are located in the interactions between Bonpos and Buddhists, between Bonpos and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, between Bonpos and the Chinese Government, and between Bonpos and foreign researchers and sponsors. Given that the audiences to whom they address their narratives vary, the meanings enacted within identities and the boundaries they represent also vary. Moreover, the findings suggest that even within the Bonpo community, the differences which exist between monastics and laity, between different generations and educational backgrounds, and experiences of

marginalisation, also adds diversity and dynamism to the ways in which religious and national identities are expressed. This chapter concludes by proposing that, it is through a process of 'dialogical interaction' that the Bon identity has come to be defined and articulated in multiple aspects: in its connection to Zhangzhung; its distinctions to Buddhism; the similarities it shares with Buddhism; and also, through the national context that Bonpo share with other Tibetan refugees.

Plate 12. The settlers welcoming the Dalai Lama at the settlement gate (2007)[56]

Plate 13. The Dalai Lama with Bon lotus hat and sceptre

[56] These photos were provided by Menri monastery in Dolanji, 2007

Plate 14. The Dalai Lama learnt from the Abbot how to use the Bonpo bell

Chapter V

Schooling and Politics: Textbooks, National Identity, and the Negotiation of Bon Identity

In Chapter III, it has been argued that annual national commemorations and celebrations play an important role in representing the official discourse of nationalism. It was suggested that, apart from reproducing official discourse, national ceremonies also act to modify the contradictions between national identity and internal diversities, and to a certain extent, re-emphasise the power relations embedded in majority-minority interactions. This chapter, by shifting focus to formal schooling and, in particular, to the textbooks composed and released by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, aims to investigate further the impact of refugee status in the formation of Tibetan nationalism; the complex power relations involved in the representation of official knowledge; and the way the Bonpo negotiate to claim their religious identity within the context of schooling.

Unlike national ceremonies, in which the Tibetan Government-in-Exile controls the way the ceremonies are held and the themes they narrate, the schooling of Tibetan refugees in India involves the political control of the Government of India, and as such, reflects the contradictions and negotiations between the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the state power of its host society. Moreover, given that schooling is 'official' and 'regulated', it illustrates another realm where the politics of identity is played out and where the 'dialogues' between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile can be observed. This is why in the last two chapters of this thesis, I choose to focus on formal schooling, rather than the informal transmission of knowledge of Bon within family life, in order to discuss another aspect of the marginalisation of Bon and the Bonpo by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (Chapter V) and the responses from the Bonpo monastic leadership to the hegemony of Buddhist identity in Tibetan nationalism (Chapter VI).

Schooling is usually associated with the transmission and maintenance of the collective memory of the nation, and is aimed at creating a collective knowledge of 'others' (Hong 2009: 87). As previous chapters have argued, identity usually manifests when confronted with 'others,' and narratives of 'who we are' are usually constructed as a response to 'who they are.' Applying this concern to schooling,

much research has focused on school textbooks in order to understand how official discourse standardises public memory by constructing images of 'us' and 'them' and the knowledge of national past (Hau 2009; Hein and Selden 2000; Hong 2009; Lee 2001; Pigg 1992; Soysal and Schissler 2005). For these researchers, the role played by the state is always the core issue, and schooling and textbooks are regarded as representations of dominant political interests and ideology (Apple 1992; Crawford 2003). However, in the case of Tibetan refugees in India, the power relations involved in their schooling are highly complex. In this case, schooling is not only designed to reflect the political ideology of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, but most importantly, it is correlated with, and restricted by their refugee status, and as such, subordinated to the control of the Government of India. As will be discussed, the dominant role played by the Government of India as their host country can be observed in the way that schools for Tibetans are set up and structured, including the development of their curricula. This 'betwixt and between' (Turner 1969; Harrell-Bond and Voutira 1992) position of Tibetan refugees, as this chapter argues, provides a vantage point for research into schooling and textbook knowledge, from which to rethink the role of education in representing national ideology, and the dynamics involved in constructing official knowledge about 'others.'

Refugees and Education: The Schooling of Tibetan Refugees in India

Upon arrival in India, the Department of Education (DOE) was established under the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, in order to develop policy on the education of Tibetan Children. In response to a request from the Dalai Lama, the Government of India agreed to assist in building separate schools for Tibetan refugees. In 1961, a Central Committee for the Education of Tibetan Refugees was established under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, within the Government of India. This committee, later renamed the Tibetan Schools Society, became the Central Tibetan Schools Administration (CTSA) in 1979. The main task of the CTSA is to build and manage the running of schools for Tibetans in India. The CTSA comprises eight members, including four Indians and four Tibetans.[57] Two of the four Tibetan members are the minister and secretary of the DOE. The structure of its membership indicates that,

[57] The Indian members are drawn from the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs, and include the Secretary of the CTSA. The Tibetan members include the minister and the secretary of the DOE, the representative of the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and the director of the CIHTS (See also http://sherig.org/schools/CTSA.htm, 2010).

although the CTSA comes under the Government of India, it also receives supervision from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. The DOE takes part in organising the curriculum related to the Tibetan language, history and culture, and publishes textbooks on these subjects. A textbook committee was organised in 1960 by the DOE, with the aim of composing Tibetan textbooks for primary and secondary levels.[58]

The schools established under the CTSA were called the Central Schools for Tibetans (CST). As at 2010, 30 CST schools have been established under the CTSA (see Figure 7),[59] and the CST Dolanji is one of them. These CST schools follow the 10+2 national educational pattern adopted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), a joint board for all the private and public schools under the Government of India. The 10+2 pattern, referring to 10 years of general education and 2 years of diversified education, includes primary (years 1-5), middle (years 6-8), secondary (years 9-10), and senior secondary (years 11-12). The CBSE conducts centralised final examinations for students of Year 10 and Year 12 every year. These two examinations are regarded as crucially important by Tibetan faulty of the CST schools, as well as by the students and their parents, given that they enable students who qualify to apply for further studies in universities in India and overseas. In this respect, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has faced the problem of striking a balance between providing students with sufficient knowledge of Tibetan language, history and culture, and providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary for life in India. The struggle between these two concerns has raised many debates within the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in the creation of educational policy, and also reflected in the reforms to the CST curriculum over the past 30 years.

[58] In 1960, the committee members included the directors of the Department of Religion and Culture and the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies (the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile), and four (Buddhist) monastic figures (Information Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama 1981: 25). In 1964 when the second textbook committee was organised, four more representatives from the four Buddhist denominations were recruited in addition to the original committee members (*ibid.*: 25-26). However, there is no record about whether a representative from the Bon religion was recruited.

[59] Apart from these 30 CST schools which were funded under the CTSA by the Government of India, there are also 17 schools (mainly at the primary level) funded exclusively by the DOE, and 21 Autonomous Schools funded by private institutions. Given that all these schools follow the curriculum approved by the CBSE, and that students are encouraged to continue their secondary studies in the CST schools in order to take part in the certificate examinations conducted by the CBSE, this chapter will focus specifically on the CST schools in discussing the issues arising from schooling and school textbooks.

Figure 7. Schools Location Map (2010)[60]

[60] From http://www.sherig.org/schools/schoolLocation.htm, 2010

In the 1960s-1980s, the CST schools followed the curriculum prescribed by the NCERT (National Council for Educational Research and Training) for Indian schools, and adopted English as their medium of instruction. Therefore, only those textbooks which concerned Tibetan language and religious history were provided by the DOE, and only these subjects were taught in Tibetan by Tibetan teachers. The remaining subjects were taught by Indian teachers. This situation reflects the subordination of Tibetans to the control of the Government of India, and highlights the restrictions which are applied to their refugee status. However, Nowak (1984) also suggests that another reason for the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's reliance on teaching resources produced by Indian schools, is that modern educational methods and subject matter were only introduced into Tibetan educational practice after they had fled into exile.

Before exile, in Tibetan societies, education was largely limited to monastics, who learnt how to read and write in the monasteries. Most of the laity were illiterate. Therefore, when the DOE was established and the development of mass education was set as its principal goal, it faced difficulty in finding teachers who were familiar with school systems fit for mass education, and most had no idea about how to design courses and write textbooks (Nowak 1984). At that time, monastics were probably the only literate people in the Tibetan refugee communities and were considered by laity as the representatives of religious knowledge. Given this, many of the teachers recruited into developing Tibetan schooling in exile were monastics. They not only had to learn the knowledge and teaching methods required of modern schooling, but also contributed to writing Tibetan textbooks. As Nowak (1984: 58) has suggested, modern schooling has become an effective medium by which Tibetan monastics, who are the traditional authority figures in Tibetan society, deliver their values and knowledge to the laity and exile-born generations. This role played by the monastics has crucially affected the way that official knowledge is constructed and transmitted via schooling. Given that most of the monks recruited by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile were Buddhists (and many of them were from the Gelug-pa), Buddhist monastic literature became the main resource for the creation of textbook knowledge. As a result, subjects concerned with Tibetan history and religious traditions were largely in accord with the textual narratives of Buddhist literature, and knowledge of Bon from the perspective of Bonpo monks was almost entirely excluded from the school curriculum up until the 1990s.

With the growth of the second and third generations, the concern to maintain a Tibetan national identity within the younger generations prompted the Tibetan Government-in-Exile to make further reforms to the CST curriculum. In 1985, the DOE set out a policy of adopting Tibetan as the medium of instruction at primary level (years 1-5). However, it was not until 1994 that textbooks were completed and introduced to all the CST schools.[61] It should be noted that in 1994, when the new curriculum for years 1-5 was released, some changes related to the representation of the Bon religion were also made in the *Tibetan Reader* for years 6-8. Since then, the textbooks for years 1 to 5 have all been written in Tibetan, except for the subject of English. These subjects, which are taught in Tibetan, include Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and the Tibetan Language. However, unlike Social Studies and the Tibetan Language, the textbooks for Mathematics and Science are primarily a translation of those prescribed by the NCSRT. From Year 6, the curriculum remains affiliated with the syllabi and textbooks prescribed by the NCERT. Therefore, except for the subjects of Tibetan language, Tibetan religions and history (*Tibetan Reader*), the courses from Year 6 are still taught via the English medium and based on the textbooks prescribed by the NCSRT (for English, Hindi, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, 'Geography, Economics & Commerce,' etc.). These subjects reflect that Tibetan students have to gain a knowledge of Indian society, Indian politics and Indian geography in addition to what the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has provided in respect of Tibetan history and religious traditions.

The reform of the curriculum in 1994 has been emphasised by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile as representing significant progress in their development of education. According to them, this reform is important because it allows Tibetans in exile to develop a better ability in Tibetan (especially reading and writing) in their first five years in school. Moreover, their decision to keep most of the curriculum in years 6-12 in accord with what is prescribed by the NCERT, has been made to ensure that Tibetan students are able to compete with Indians when they take entrance exams for further studies in India. These concerns may represent a strategic balance in respect of educational policy in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, in order to resolve the contradictions inherent in maintaining a Tibetan identity in exile while also making a good life in the host society. However, as mentioned, they also reflect

[61] See the review of educational policy published by the DOE: http://www.tcewf.org/publications/info94/index.html (1994/1995).

an increasing need on the part of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, to construct and standardise the knowledge of its political and cultural boundaries (Mao 2008) among the next generations.

As will be discussed, in the textbooks on *Social Studies* (years 3-5), the students are introduced to a basic knowledge of Tibetan society, cultural heritage, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and ideas such as the UNO (United Nations Organisation) and Tibet as an independent country. In these texts, images of different 'others,' in particular, the Chinese, are highlighted in order to illustrate the political and cultural boundaries of the Tibetan nation. At the same time, the internal diversities, reflected in regional and denominational differences, are played down and subordinated to a shared Buddhist heritage in order to support a homogeneous version of the Tibetan culture (Hess 2009: 22; Kolas 1996; McGranahan 2005: 573-574). These emphases on the role of Buddhist identity in constructing a sense of national community are continued in the *Tibetan Readers*, the textbooks for Tibetan history and religious traditions for years 6-8, in which mainstream Buddhist values and historical narratives serve as the framework for the representation of a national past. For students who continue to years 9 and 10, the 'official knowledge' (Apple 1992) of what it means to be a Tibetan is further confirmed by and embodied in the words of the Dalai Lama, whose autobiography, *My Land and My People* (1962), is adopted as the textbook for history and religious studies lessons.

The Central School for Tibetans in Dolanji (CST Dolanji)

The CST Dolanji was established in 1975, initially as a primary school. In 1989, the settlement leadership requested the CTSA to upgrade the school to middle level, in which students could receive basic education until Year 8. In 2003, the school was further upgraded to the secondary level, providing students with classes up to and including Year 10.[62] In 2007-2008, besides the classes from years 1 to 10, the CST Dolanji also offered a 2-year nursery (half day) for small children before they reached the age of Year 1. According to Rinchen (the settlement representative) and the monks, they had requested that the school be upgraded to secondary level because they wanted to provide the students with an opportunity to stay longer in the settlement. However, why is it important to have the students stay in Dolanji?

[62] From May 2011, years 11 and 12 have also been added to the CST Dolanji.

From the perspective of the monks, the longer the students stay in Dolanji, the more opportunity they will have to participate in the activities held by Menri monastery, which, according to them, would help students to build up knowledge of their religion. Moreover, the students in Dolanji sometimes also have extra religious studies courses taught by the Bonpo monks, outside of their regular school curriculum. This also adds to the worries of the monastic leadership as they fear that, as soon as students leave Dolanji, they will have few opportunities to learn about the Bon religion. These worries, which are central to the leadership's concerns for the preservation of the Bon identity in the younger generations, will be discussed later in this chapter and also in the next chapter. Another reason pointed out by Rinchen is that, many students do not continue their studies when they finish at the school in Dolanji. Therefore, the settlement leadership thought that upgrading to a secondary school might encourage some students to complete their education up to the secondary level.

In 2007-2008 when I conducted the research for this thesis, around 500 students were studying at the CST Dolanji.[63] More than 90% of these were Bonpos, and only a few were Nepalese and Indians from neighbouring villages. There were 22 teachers, including 10 Tibetans and 12 Indians. All of these teachers were appointed by the CTSA, and could be transferred to other CST schools at any time. None of them were from the settlement, and also, none of them were Bonpo. Among the students, some of them planned to take the entrance exam for Bon studies at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS, see Chapter IV) when they finished their studies in year 7 or 8. Some (most were girls), who wanted to become teachers, planned to enrol at the teachers' school in Dharamsala after their senior secondary studies, whereas some of the boys said they wanted to join the monastery dialectic school. Students who were preparing for the entrance exam for the CIHTS usually went to the monastery after their school classes, in order to receive private tutoring in Tibetan language from the monks.

According to the students, teachers and adult settlers, the CIHTS is usually the first choice for most students who want to continue their studies after they graduate from

[63] These students included the children of lay settlers, several girls from the nunnery, boys from the BCWC (the Bon Children Welfare Centre , which belongs to Menri monastery), children from the BCH (the Bon Children's Home), and some Nepali and Indian children from nearby villages.

the CST Dolanji. Apart from the fact that the CIHTS provides specific courses in terms of religious affiliations, most of my informants pointed out that the CIHTS is also the 'best' educational institution in the Tibetan community in India. Pema, in her late twenties, a graduate from the CIHTS with a master's degree, and now a secretary in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, explained that a certificate from the CIHTS was almost a guarantee in securing a job at the Tibetan Government-in-Exile or in other Tibetan settlements. Additionally, as many monks have stressed, the degrees from the CIHTS (including higher secondary, B.A. and M.A.) are not only recognised by the Government of India, but they also have a very good reputation overseas. With certificates from the CIHTS, some monks had applied for further studies (mostly religious studies) at universities in Europe and the United States. However, given that the entrance exam is competitive and the seats opened for each denominational branch are limited (until 2008, there were 5 places allocated for Bon studies per year), some Bonpo students chose to transfer to the CST Shimla or schools in Dharamsala, before or after finishing their Year 10 studies in Dolanji. A few students took entrance examinations for other Indian schools (some were located nearby, and some were in the big cities, such as Chandigarh) which, according to their parents, were of higher educational quality compared to the CST schools.

The educational concerns expressed by students and their parents reflect that, although the settlement leadership and many of the monks prefer students to stay as long as possible in Dolanji in order to maintain their religious ties with the monastery, for many laity, it is more important to find a good job for the future, and to do so, they have to graduate from schools with better reputations. This is why many of the parents in Dolanji tried to transfer their children to the CST schools in larger settlements, for example, in Shimla, Dehradun, Mussoorie, and Dharamsala. According to the parents, even if their children did not like to study and could not get good grades from these schools, they still believed that they would receive a better quality of education there. This is because the CST schools in these settlements are usually bigger than the CST in Dolanji, and as such, many parents believe that their faculty and facilities are also better than those at the CST Dolanji. I suggest that these concerns expressed by the laity may have urged Bonpo monastics to conclude that, if they wanted to instil a sense of Bon identity in the next generation, they would have to extend their focus from the school conditions in Dolanji to the curriculum provided by the DOE for every CST school. This is why the Bonpo monks have,

since the 1980s, tried to raise issues of curriculum reform with the DOE, and made efforts to bring their input to the portrayal of the Bon religion in textbooks. With their efforts, the textbooks used by the CST schools today have paid more attention to the Bon religion and its 'traditions', compared to those which were produced in the 1960s-1980s.

The following discussions will focus on textbooks on Tibetan used in the CST Dolanji in 2007-2008, on which I based my investigation into how the textbooks impart what it means to be a Tibetan, to the students, and how school teachers, students, and their parents engage with the content of the textbook.[64] These textbooks include *Social Studies* (years 3-5), *Tibetan Readers* (years 6-8), and *My Land and My People* (years 9-10). It should be noted that, when researching the interplay between schooling and social relationships, it is important to look at the ways in which teachers make decisions about what should be taught and how it should be taught in class (Apple 1992: 5), and, in order to do this, researchers must able to observe interaction within the classroom. In Dolanji, foreigners were not allowed to enter the school during class time. Some teachers explained to me that this restriction was maintained in order prevent Western sponsors from interfering in the classes and to ensure that students were able to concentrate on their studies.[65] A few of them mentioned that the principal was also worried that, if district and state officials were concerned that foreigners were entering the classes, both he and the settlement leadership would be in trouble, because in theory foreigners were only allowed to stay around the monastery. These restrictions represent important aspects of the influence of both Western sponsors and the Indian authorities in the lives of the Bonpo in Dolanji (which may also apply to other Tibetan refugees).

Given this restriction, this research has focused on the narratives represented in textbooks, rather than social interaction in the school and classroom, and this has

[64] Given that the textbooks prescribed by the NCERT are aimed at Indian schools and at Indian citizens, this chapter, which is concerned with the formation of official Tibetan national identity, will focus solely on the textbooks prescribed by the DOE.

[65] According to them, several years ago, when the rule was not strictly obeyed, some foreigners came to observe the classes and began to interfere in the way the teachers punished the students. Also, they had commented that students did not learn English 'properly' and offered to help with the English classes (which were usually taught by Indian teachers). These interjections had caused problems for the teachers in maintaining control of their classes, and created tension between Tibetan and Indian teachers, and between the school principal (an Indian appointed by the CTSA) and settlement leadership. As a result, both school and settlement leadership agreed to ban foreigners from entering the school during school hours.

allowed me to focus on the importance and meaning of education and schooling from another perspective. I usually went to the school in the late afternoon, at which time classes had finished, and some of the boys would be playing basketball or volleyball in the school playground. Girls played badminton sometimes, but most of the time, they gathered in small groups at different corners of the school, chatting, singing, and sometimes helping their junior classmates read and write their homework. I started to learn the content of the textbooks from these students (mostly girls), who were always keen to explain what the textbooks contained. We talked about how their teachers taught the lessons, and how they explained the lessons to their grandparents, most of whom had never been to school. Some students liked to imitate their teachers, and often teachers were given nicknames. We sometimes sat in the meadow outside the school, and sometimes on the wooden benches in front of a tea shop near the school. Some older settlers, mostly female, would often gather outside the shop, drinking tea and chatting before they went home for dinner. They liked to ask the students about what we were discussing, and were usually keen to give me their opinions about the content and narratives presented in the textbooks.

Many of these older settlers were illiterate. They always told the students to study hard. Some thought that I went to school everyday because I was learning Tibetan with the students. Therefore, they often reminded me that reading and writing were very important and that I had to practice them everyday. Sometimes the teachers and monks who passed by would tease the students, joking that they had to study harder in order to teach me. Some monks would walk quietly near the students, listening to how they talked with me in English, and often commenting that they didn't know the students could speak such good English. However, students would often go quiet when they realised that the monks were listening, or told them to go away. I also visited some of the teachers in their houses, where we talked about the curriculum reform and their perspectives on textbook content. They were interested to know what I had learnt from the textbooks and often asked whether I felt I knew more about Tibetans now. Moreover, Yung Drung, a senior monk from Menri monastery and at the time of my fieldwork the religious studies teacher in the CST Dolanji, helped me to translate the *Social Studies* and *Tibetan Readers* textbooks, and discussed with me how he taught religious history lessons in the school. Thus, although my research was conducted outwith the immediate context of the classroom, I was nevertheless able to study the textbooks, how they were used from a variety of

perspectives, and to understand how the idea of schooling was perceived by students/teachers, and different generations. Given that it was mainly from our conversations on textbook knowledge that I learnt about the meanings of schooling from the settlers, I have decide to structure the main body of this chapter from an analysis of textbook narratives, with the 'voices' of students, teachers, lay adults and monks intertwined throughout the discussion.

Plate 15. Morning Assembly in the CST Dolanji, May 2007

Plate 16. Students playing volleyball after classes, 2007

The Representation of Cultural and Political Boundaries

Many researchers have suggested that textbook narratives in schooling can never be neutral (Apple 1992; Cooley 2003; Hong 2009: Lee 2001), and rather, that they are always political (Hau 2009; Hein and Selden 2000; Mao 2008; Pigg 1992; Soysal and Schissler 2005). In his study of the history curriculum in Serbia and Montenegro, Crawford (2003) observes how textbook knowledge reflects dominant political interests and ideology, and how the change of social and political needs has affected textbook content over the decades. As argued, identity, in particular national identity, is always manifested when it is positioned in relation to different 'others,' and when its contrasts with 'others' are brought out and highlighted. When this concern is applied to schooling which aims to maintain and re-enforce a collective knowledge of the nation in the next generations, textbooks become a vital apparatus through which how to make sense of the world and how to engage with different 'others' are represented.

Hong (2009), from the perspective of cultural studies, argues that school textbooks should be understood as a cultural and political text, which represents how a society distinguishes between 'us' and 'them,' and which reflects the social and political strategies of a nation or a state in dealing with different 'others.' His research focuses on the geography textbooks used by American schools to examine the ways in which the concept of Asia and images of different Asian countries are represented. By examining how the various countries in East Asia are portrayed differently, and the images that are used to do so, in accordance with their cultural and political relationships to the United States (cf. Hong 2009: 96), Hong argues that school textbooks are usually utilised by the state in order to legitimise its policies, and also, to maintain the diplomatic and economic relationships the state had built with different 'others' (see also Lee 2001). By selectively emphasising and downplaying the similarities and differences embedded in different 'others' in relation to 'the Americans,' the textbooks produce and reproduce a hierarchical relationship between the U.S. and Asia, which, as Hong has suggested, reflects the continuation of the colonial notions of the West and the non-West (cf. 2009: 96).

In the case of Tibetan refugees in India, not only the notion of schooling but also the concept of national identity are both new to the Tibetans. Therefore, research into the ways in which the textbooks represent images of Tibetans and the Tibetan nation is

of crucial significance, because it helps us to understand the struggles of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile between 'traditional' and 'modern,' and between a homogeneous national identity and internal diversities. Moreover, it also provides a place from which to examine how the national discourse on refugees engages with different 'others,' both externally and internally, and how it manipulates resources in order to legitimate its national claims and the present situation of refugees. As well as these aspects, this section will also discuss the perspectives of the Bonpo in respect of the CST curriculum, and explores how they have negotiated with the DOE over how the Bon identity is portrayed within school textbooks.

As noted, the textbooks for *Social Studies*, which adopt Tibetan as the medium of instruction, have only been published since 1994. In terms of the DOE and the faculty of the CST Dolanji, a number of meetings were held over the past decade in order to review and discuss the feedback on the new curriculum. The same review has also been applied to the changes made for *Tibetan Readers* in 1994.The feedback was stated to be positive, and to date, no change has been made to this curriculum. This allows us to argue that the textbooks used in 2007-2008 represent 'official knowledge', as constructed and conveyed by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile over the past decade.

Social Studies: Tradition, Modernity and Historical 'Facts'[66]

The curriculum content for *Social Studies* (Tables 5-7) indicates that this subject has been designed to introduce students, mostly aged 9-12, to a basic knowledge of Tibetan culture and the political situation of Tibetan exiles in the present. The texts represent the 'traditions' of Tibetan culture, including the ritual of purification, which is still practiced and can be observed in Tibetan communities across Himalayan areas; 'Tibetan' festivals; 'Tibetan' handicrafts; Tibetan way of life ('Tibetan' Nomads); 'Tibetan' Costume; the twelve animal signs, which mark the characteristics of each year; 'Tibetan' medicine; and 'Tibetan' heritage. By categorising these topics under the title of 'Tibetan' proper, the textbooks convey standardised conceptions of what it means to be a Tibetan. A student or a teacher who reads and teaches the texts could easily imagine themselves being a Tibetan by cross-examining what they do in their daily lives with the criteria set up by the textbooks. When reading the texts with me,

[66] The textbook content presented in this chapter was translated with the help of Yung Drung. The content has been double checked by Yung Drung, some of the other monks, and myself, and was further scrutinised when I read the texts with the students from the CST Dolanji.

students always drew upon examples from what we saw and what they did in their daily lives, to explain what these 'traditions' meant. For example, they showed me the dresses they wore at Tibetan New Year to teach me how to name each part of the dress as it was identified in the textbook, and the accessories they 'traditionally' wore with the dresses. Some students pointed to the ritual of purification which had been held annually in the monastery during the Tibetan New Year, to illustrate how they participated in this ritual.

Table 5. *Social Studies* for Year 3 (2007-2008):

Lesson 1	Our World
Lesson 2	Early Stone Age
Lesson 3	Late Stone Age
Lesson 4	Tibet (*bod*)
Lesson 5	The Ritual of *bsang gsol* (Ritual of Purification)
Lesson 6	Tibetan Festivals
Lesson 7	Tibetan Handicrafts
Lesson 8	Yak
Lesson 9	Tibetan Nomads

Table 6. *Social Studies* for Year 4 (2007-2008):

Lesson 1	Human Beings and Eras
Lesson 2	A Country is a Society
Lesson 3	Mountains, Rivers and Lakes of Tibet
Lesson 4	Tibetan Costume
Lesson 5	Tibetan Flag
Lesson 6	Potala Palace
Lesson 7	The Twelve Animal Signs of the Year
Lesson 8	Tibetan Medicine
Lesson 9	Famous Figures (Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Mahatma Gandhi, Hermann-Gmeiner, and Alfred Nobel)

Table 7. *Social Studies* for Year 5 (2007-2008):

Lesson 1	Latitude and Longitude
Lesson 2	Weather
Lesson 3	Maps
Lesson 4	The United Nations Organisation (UNO)
Lesson 5	Tibet is an Independent Country [*bod 'di rang btsan rgyal khab cig yin*]
Lesson 6	The Tibetan Government-in-Exile
Lesson 7	Tibetan Heritage
Lesson 8	Buddhist Holy Places
Lesson 9	Famous Figures

Some of the 'traditional' characteristics which are represented in the textbooks, for example, the nomadic life and the dress of Tibetan kings and aristocrats, have never been personally experienced by the students or their teachers. These texts may be considered as aiming to instil a sense of history in the students' minds, and to a certain extent, re-affirm a collective memory of the national past. When teaching these lessons, for example nomadic life in Tibet, a few of the teachers would draw upon the recollections of older families or relatives, to introduce the texts with vivid scenes. Several teachers (aged around 50-60 years old), who had lived in Tibet when they were young, would talk about their memories of life in Tibet.

Apart from the lessons which intend to evoke and represent traditional values and cultural features of Tibetan societies, these textbooks also utilise modern technology and idioms in order to bring to students an image of 'Tibet,' and their refugee status in exile. In the lesson on 'Tibet' (Lesson 4, Year 3), an image of a political map of Tibet is presented (Plate 17), on which its neighbouring countries, including Nepal, China, and India are also marked. In terms of this map, 'Tibet' includes regions of Amdo (North-eastern Tibet), Kham (Eastern Tibet), and U-Tsang (Central Tibet). This map is very different from what is represented on the political map of China, on which the Tibet Autonomous Region is marked over an area which includes most of Central Tibet and some of Eastern Tibet, whereas Amdo and most of Kham are shown as belonging to the provinces of Sichuan and Qinghai. These two different presentations of 'Tibet' illustrate that maps usually do not represent what the reality is, but rather, represent an assertion of or struggle over how things should really be (Anderson 1991: 177-178), and in this case, it reveals the struggle between China and the Tibetan leadership in exile over the cultural and political boundaries of 'Tibet'.

According to the students, they have to learn to memorise the map of Tibet and draw it from memory from Year 3. From Year 5, they need to further memorise the names and location of its neighbouring countries. Sometimes in the classes, teachers would give quizzes asking students to draw the correct shape of Tibet and point out its neighbouring countries. From the students' remarks, it is found that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the school teachers have used the map, which shows the geographical extent of the nation, with clear political boundaries, to create an image of the Tibetan nation for the younger generation. Although most of these students

were born in exile and had never seen Tibet, by drawing the map of Tibet and identifying its neighbouring countries, they began to construct an image of Tibet in their minds. If a nation, as Anderson (1991) asserts, comes into being when people imagine a shared origin and shared cultural values, in using this map the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Tibetan faculty have made the first step in instilling in the students' minds standardised images of 'Tibet', including its location, its neighbours, and those who belong to it.

Plate 17. Tibet and its Neighbouring Countries: East Turkistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, China

Moreover, apart from the representations of cultural features and Tibet's political boundaries, the textbooks also rely heavily on the idioms of national flag, national currency, and constitution, and notions of citizenship, democracy, and human rights in order to depict the political situation of Tibetans past and present. In the lesson on 'A Country is a Society' (Lesson 2, Year 4), it is stated,

> *"Our country [rgyal khab] of Tibet was independent before 1959. Our country had all the things a country should have. It was the Chinese who invaded Tibet and made many Tibetan people suffer. […] Now the Tibetan Government-in-Exile is the official and authentic government of all Tibetans inside and outside Tibet". (pp 29-30)*

In the same lesson, representations of Tibetan currency, the Tibetan emblem, and the Tibetan flag are displayed (Plate 18) to demonstrate that, before the Chinese invaded Tibet in the 1950s, Tibet had been an independent country for centuries. Additionally, the Tibetan flag is displayed beside the flag of the UNO and parallel to flags of other countries (Plate 19) in an attempt to represent and claim the national legitimacy of Tibet within the international order. These representations reflect that, while stressing that cultural features are what make Tibetans Tibetan, at the same time, the text draws upon international contexts and modern idioms in order to present how Tibet should be recognised within international discourse as a legitimate nation. The statements emphasising Tibet's independent status are phrased by comparing the political status and political structures of Tibet (for example, by illustrating the function of the Lhasa Government) with other countries. By stating that Tibet had developed a country-to-country relationship with other countries, and exercised its political authority over the Tibetan population, the text informs the students that Tibet had not only defined itself as a country prior to 1959, but had also been defined and recognised by other countries as an independent nation. As has been argued, it is through the comparison with 'others,' and by bringing 'others' into the representations, that images of 'us' begin to manifest. In so doing, the textbooks show the students a broader image of the world, and how Tibet and Tibetans should be positioned within this picture.

Plate 18. (Left) Tibetan Notes and Coins; (Right) Tibetan Flag, Tibetan national emblem, and Tibetan Constitution (Lesson 2, Year 4)

Plate 19. Depicting "the UNO and flags of some countries" (Lesson 2, Year 4)

When engaging with the knowledge of Tibet introduced by the textbooks, students seemed to show a greater interest than they felt for other subjects. Some of the girls complained to me about how boring Mathematics and Chemistry were, but did not describe *Social Studies* or *Tibetan Readers* in that way. I sometimes saw the students reading their *Social Studies* textbooks to their grandparents, explaining to them what the world was like in the pre-historical period[67] and what the textbooks said about the symbols of the national flag. The older settlers told me that they saw the Tibetan national flag all the time, but didn't know the detailed explanations of the symbols represented on it. The students also liked to show the map of Tibet to their parents or grandparents, pointing out the location of the regions from which they originated, and explaining their geographical relationship with India. Older settlers were always very surprised to find that the places where they were from and where they were now, could be located on paper. The ways in which the students and their parents and grandparents engaged with the textbook knowledge of Tibet, illustrates how the idea of Tibet has been imagined using different sources by different generations, and how schooling has provided an important means by which the younger generations learn about the past.

[67] Drenpa, a student who was about 14 years old, told me that once he told his grandfather that the earth is round and it rotates very fast. However, his grandfather laughed at him and told him that this was not possible. According to his grandfather, if the earth was really spinning, his cow, which was eating grass on the hilltops, would have fallen off the hills by now.

These textbook representations, which combine descriptions of cultural traditions with modern notions of nation and state, reflect an important characteristic of the official discourse of Tibetan nationalism. As Hess (2009) has suggested, in order to represent a nation which has no state, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile draws upon 'culture' to validate its claims of a Tibetan nation, and applies modern idioms and notions to illustrate its legitimate position within the international sphere. As a result, the Tibetan national discourse represents the dual aim of maintaining traditions and connecting with modern knowledge. Hess describes this characteristic as 'diaspora consciousness' (2009: 73), and proposes that it is in fact a result of, and in response to, the context of exile, in which Tibetan refugees are marginalised both by the national order of things and by the international order. In resisting this marginalisation, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile is compelled to claim its national legitimacy by engaging both with national and transnational frameworks (2009: 73-74). This intention of the Tibetan exiled leadership, to situate their assertions of nationhood within international discourse, may explain the reason why the lesson on 'the United Nations Organisation' (Lesson 4, Year 5) is included in textbooks, although the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has yet to be a member of this organisation. In this lesson, the structure and goals of the UNO are introduced, and the text represents the hope that Tibet's national identity will be accepted by this organisation in the future.

Apart from claims of a distinctive culture and the right to self-government, the *Social Studies* texts also draw upon historical 'facts' in order to illustrate the legitimacy of Tibet as a country which has a past. This can be observed from the lesson, 'Tibet is an Independent Country' (Lesson 5, Year 5). Unlike other lessons, the main part of this lesson is written in the form of questions and answers. It begins with the statement, '*Our Tibet has a history of over a 1000 years. The country of Tibet had been independent prior to 1959*' (pp 43). After presenting a brief review of 'Tibetan' history (from the 41 'Tibetan' kings of the Yarlung Dynasty to the Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1959), the lesson moves on to debate the relationship between Tibet and China.

To the question, '*Is Tibet Part of China?*', the section under the subtitle, '*What the Chinese Say,*' gives reasons why the Chinese insist that Tibet is an integral part of China. It states:

> *"The main reason the Chinese say that Tibet is part of China is that Tibet had been ruled by the Yuan Dynasty. […] In the 12th century, the Mongolian king, Genghis Khan, was very powerful. His successor invaded China, conquered many countries in Asia, and even expanded the empire into Eastern Europe. Kublai Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, conquered China [Song Dynasty] in 1279 and founded the Yuan Dynasty. During the Yuan Dynasty, the Mongolians invaded Tibet. We should note that it was the Mongolians who invaded Tibet, not the Chinese. There is no document which proves that the Chinese invaded Tibet. Can we say that all the countries which had once been under the control of the Mongolians should be part of China now? If so, many Asian countries and some in Europe should also be integrated into China. The relationship between Kublai Khan and Tibet was built on religious affairs, not on political ones. Also, if Kublai Khan did conquer Tibet, Tibet should be considered as being part of Mongolia, not China". (pp 43-53)*

Having indicated how wrong and how 'untrue' the historical representations asserted by the Chinese are, the lesson continues by representing the 'truth' from the perspective of the Tibetans. Under the title, '*Why is Tibet not part of China?*', the text lists 17 reasons which draw upon cultural features and historical events to illustrate the answers. The text stresses that the interactions between Tibet, China and other countries (including the U.S., the U.K., India, Nepal, etc.) prior to 1959 were always based on country-to-country relations. The lesson ends by listing four main reasons why China invaded Tibet, and three crucial effects, explaining how the Chinese have persecuted the Tibetan way of life and the natural environment of Tibet ever since they took over Tibet in 1959. At the end of this lesson, two black-and-white photos are presented (Plate 20), one of which shows a Tibetan being beaten by a Chinese soldier, the other which shows a march by Tibetans on Tibetan Uprising Day in the early years of exile.

This lesson shows that, apart from 'others,' the text also actively engages with the past in order to represent the legitimacy of Tibet as an independent nation as 'a matter-of-fact' (Blanchetti-Revelli 2003: 46). As can be seen, this attempt to reveal 'what had really happened' relates directly to the struggle to position Tibet in terms of the past. In other words, the text is framed as an active response to the assertions of the Chinese Government in relation to Tibet. By structuring the text in the form of

questions and answers, the lesson not only tells the students what the 'truth' is, but most importantly, it also teaches students how to answer questions centred on the issue of Tibet when they are engaging with the Chinese and international audiences. Many students have memorised the reasons listed by the text and, when I asked them what they thought about the relationship between Tibet and China, explained to me in fluid terms their response to the Chinese on the issue of Tibet. Some even added dramatic stories with their explanations, about how the Tibetans had been forced to live a miserable life with no freedom since 1959. When listening to our conversations, some of the elders teased the students, saying that none of them had experienced life without freedom, so how could they explain what was meant by 'freedom' (*rang btsan*)?

Plate 20. A Tibetan being beaten by a Chinese soldier (upper image); Tibetans marching in India (lower image)

Powers (2004), in his study of the historical literature produced by the Tibetan exiles and the Chinese Government, examines how history becomes an important tool by which Tibetan exiles and the Chinese Government battle for their respective political ideologies. According to his findings, although the historical narratives of both sides

are ‘mutually incompatible’ (2004: x), they both agree with the same principal events, for example, the royal marriage between Songtsan Gampo (the Tibetan king of Yarlung) and the Chinese princess Wencheng (ca. 618-650), and the invasion of Tibet by the Yuan Dynasty in the thirteenth century (2004: 26). However, the interpretation of these events from both sides are completely different. For example, the Chinese authors depict the marriage between Songtsan Gampo and Princess Wencheng as proof that Tibet was a tributary of China. However, according to the Tibetan version, the marriage happened as the result of a battle in which Tibet attacked and defeated the forces of the Tang Dynasty. In order to maintain a peaceful relationship on the border between the Tang Dynasty and Tibet, the Chinese emperor agreed to marry his daughter to Songtsan Gampo.

In *Social Studies*, the conflict between Tibet and the Yuan Dynasty in the thirteenth century is interpreted as a confrontation between Tibetans and Mongolians, rather than between Tibetans and Chinese. Additionally, the text stresses that Tibet did not lose its land to the Yuan in the conflict. Instead, they developed a special priest-patron (m*chod yon*) relationship, in which the Mongolian emperor adopted Buddhism as his state religion and regarded the leader of the Sakya-pa in Tibet as his spiritual teacher. In this representation, Tibet subdued the leadership of the Yuan by manifesting its religious power, and, as a result, the Yuan Dynasty came under the patronage of Tibetan Buddhism. This is very different from what is asserted by the Chinese Government, which depicts Tibet as having been defeated in battle and become part of the Yuan Dynasty, thus validating Chinese claims to sovereignty over Tibet (Powers 2004). These arguments on historical ‘facts’ and ‘truth’ between the Tibetan exiled leadership and the Chinese Government, indicate that ‘what really happened’ only matters when it can be applied to validate and legitimate a particular political assertion in respect of the present. Therefore, the histories depicted in the textbooks represent a political struggle, and the articulation of propaganda for a particular political ideology (Lee 2001; Mao 2008; Powers 2004; Soysal and Schissler 2005). The political character of history as depicted in *Social Studies* can be further observed in the *Tibetan Readers* texts.

In brief, when we consider the lessons in *Social Studies*, they are found to be based on the idea that Tibetans are unique in terms of their cultural features (language, way of life, traditions, and dress), and that Tibet comprises all the characteristics of a

modern nation-state (national flag, currency, government and institutions). As Hess (2009) has put it, the claims of cultural rights and emphasis on modernity enacted in Tibetan nationalism, exemplify the way in which stateless people imagine their national identity and argue their national legitimacy. Given that their assertions of nationhood are constructed in the context of exile and cannot be validated by a state power, the stateless population tends to take up culture as a manifestation of their distinction and draw upon notions such as human rights and historical 'facts' in order to claim the legitimacy of their nationalism (see also Malkki 1995a). In so doing, they not only find their position in the national order of things, but at the same time, they also locate their assertions outside the national order and within the realm of international affairs. As has been found, both in the *Social Studies* texts and the official statements made by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan cause is usually presented in terms of a universal responsibility, which is not only about the battle between Tibetans and the Chinese over the land of Tibet, but is of importance to everybody who believes in human rights and democracy.

Tibetan Readers: History as a Battle for Political Legitimacy

From Years 6 to 8, the only textbooks written in Tibetan are *Tibetan Readers*, which comprise two parts for each class. *Part I* is concerned with Tibetan grammar and writing (based on the Lhasa dialect), and *Part II* contains material on the political and religious history of Tibet prior to 1959. The lessons in *Tibetan Reader Part II* are structured in accordance with four categories (Tables 8-10): History (*rgyal rabs*), Religious History (*chos 'byung*), Philosophy (*rigs lam*) and Religion (*nang chos*). These categories reveal that, in the official discourse of Tibetan nationalism, history is usually represented through religious identity, and religious values and idioms are often applied to validate historical accounts and argue the national ideology. The following discussion will concentrate on the content of Part II in an attempt to understand how history is framed in order to resist the claims made by external 'others' and subdue internal diversity. It will be argued that education and power are correlated, and their interconnection is usually manifested through textbook knowledge, which signifies "who constructs whose identity" (Mao 2008: 585) and how the knowledge should be presented. As suggested, textbook accounts can never be neutral; rather, they are actively constructing knowledge which supports and legitimates the cultural and political claims of the dominant group (Pigg 1992: 500-503).

Table 8. *Tibetan Reader Part II*, Year 6 (2007-2008):

History (*rgyal rbas*)	
Chapter 1	The Formation of the Land and People of Tibet
Chapter 2	Early History of Tibetan Society
Chapter 3	Early History of the Tibetan Kingdom
Chapter 4	Political and Religious Progress
Chapter 5	From Trisong Detsen (*khri srong lde btsan*) to Lang Darma (*glang dhar ma*)
Chapter 6	Tibet Divided
Religious History (*chos 'byung*)	
Chapter 7	**The Tradition of Yungdrung Bon**
Chapter 8	The Descent of Buddha from the Pure Land of Joy (*dga' ldan*)
Chapter 9	Becoming Skilled and Enjoying the Life of Being a Prince
Chapter 10	The Sufferings of the World
Chapter 11	Renunciation and the Practice of Austerities
Chapter 12	Taming the Negative Forces of the Mind
Chapter 13	Attain Enlightenment and Turn the Wheel of Dharma
Chapter 14	The Deed of Death
Philosophy (*rigs lam*)	
Chapter 15	Answering according to bsDus Gra
Chapter 16	The logic of white and red
Chapter 17	The logic of existence
Chapter 18	The logic of cause and result
Religion (*nang chos*)[68]	
Chapter19	Prostration and offering
Chapter 20	Four noble truths
Chapter 21	Explanation of six words

Table 9. *Tibetan Reader Part II*, Year 7 (2007-2008):

History(*rgyal rbas*)	
Chapter 1	The Priest and Patron Relationship between Tibet and Mongolia
Chapter 2	The Phagmodrupa (*phag mo dru pa*) Dynasty
Chapter 3	The Rinpungpa (*rin spungs pa*) Dynasty
Chapter 4	The Depa Tsangpa (*sde pa gtsang pa*) Dynasty
Chapter 5	From the 1st Dalai Lama to the 4th Dalai Lama
Religious history(*chos 'byung*)	
Chapter 6	The Seven Disciples of the Buddha
Chapter 7	The First Three Buddhist Councils
Chapter 8	The Dreams of King Kri Kri
Chapter 9	The three cycles of the degeneration of the teaching
Philosophy(*rigs lam*)	
Chapter 10	*Spyi dang bye brag rnam bzhag*
Chapter 11	*Mtsan mtson rnam bzhag*
Religion (*nang chos*)	
Chapter 12	Karmic cause and effect
Chapter 13	**The Philosophy of the Bon religion**
Chapter 14	The Philosophy of Nyingma-pa
Chapter 15	The Philosophy of Kagyu-pa
Chapter 16	The Philosophy of Sakya-pa
Chapter 17	The Philosophy of Kadam-pa
Chapter 18	The Philosophy of Gelug-pa

[68] Here the term 'Religion' (*nang chos*) can also be translated as 'the religion of *nang pa*' (literally the Insiders, see Chapter IV).

Table 10. *Tibetan Reader Part II*, Year 8 (2007-2008):

History (*rgyal rbas*)	
Chapter 1	The 5th Dalai Lama
Chapter 2	The 6th Dalai Lama
Chapter 3	The 7th Dalai Lama
Chapter 4	The 8th Dalai Lama
Chapter 5	The 9th and 10th Dalai Lamas
Chapter 6	The 11th and 12th Dalai Lamas
Chapter 7	The 13th Dalai Lama
Chapter 8	The 14th Dalai Lama
Religious History (*chos 'byung*)	
Chapter 9	Phakpa Lhudrup (*'phags pa klu grub*)
Chapter 10	Phakpa Lha (*slob dpon 'phags pa lha*)
Chapter 11	Phakpa Thokme (*'phags pa thogs med*)
Chapter 12	Lopen Yig-Nyen (*slob dpon dbyig gnyen*)
Chapter 13	Lopen Chok Lang (*slob dpon phogs glang*)
Chapter 14	Palden Cheo Drak (*dpal ldan chos grags*)
Chapter 15	Lopen Yonten Wo and Shakay Wo (*slob dpon yonten 'od dang shakya 'od*)
Philosophy (*rigs lam*)	
Chapter 16	Logic
Chapter 17	51 Types of Mind States (or Mental Factors)
Religion (*nang chos*)	
Chapter 18	The Results of Various Non-virtuous Actions
Chapter 19	The Schools of Vaibhā□ika (*bye brag smra ba*) and Sautrāntika (*mdo sde pa*)
Chapter 20	The School of Cittamātra (*sems tsam pa*)
Chapter 21	The School of Madhyamaka (*dbu ma pa*)

Compared to *Social Studies*, which introduce students to modern concepts of nation, identity, and culture, the *Tibetan Readers* integrate a large amount of religious history and philosophy in an attempt to represent a religion-based history of Tibet, and emphasise the religious nature of Tibetan identity (Dreyfus 2002). For most students, the *Tibetan Readers* appeared to be 'difficult', and the content was 'hard to memorise'. They were asked by teachers to memorise the details of some historical events, for example, the years in which the Tibetan Kingdom began and ended, and the names of kings, particularly the three Dharma Kings and their important contributions. A few students had shown great enthusiasm for memorising these details, but many told me that they had difficulty in memorising the 'years'. Almost all the students were well acquainted with the stories relating to Shakyamuni and knew them well (Chapter 8-14, Table 8), and were keen to tell me how he had lived a life as a prince and how he had decided to renounce the world and become a monk. They knew the stories of Tonpa Shenrab too (Chapter 7, Table 8). However, given that there was only one lesson about Tonpa Shenrab and his story was introduced in a condensed summary rather than as a narrative, most students seemed to know more about the life story of Shakyamuni than that of Tonpa Shenrab.

Moreover, when it came to the lessons in the categories of 'Philosophy' and 'Religion', students usually said to me that they did not understand the content well, and perhaps I should go and ask one of the monks. According to them, their teachers did not teach these parts and usually the questions which appeared in their examination only related to the sections on 'History' and 'Religious History'. Most of the teachers admitted that they normally skipped the 'Philosophy' and 'Religion' sections. In their explanations, this was because the content was too difficult to be explained in an easy form to the students. However, according to the monks in Dolanji, the main reason that school teachers used to skip the parts on 'Philosophy' and 'Religion' was that the teachers, unlike the monks who had received a monastic education, did not understand the religious philosophies. And that was why Yung Drung, who had recently been appointed to be the religious studies teacher in the school, was requested by the faculty to help with those classes which were based on the *Tibetan Readers*.

When we consider the content of the *Tibetan Readers*, it is found that, apart from emphasising a Buddhist version of history, they also present a partial focus on the regions of U and Tsang (Central Tibet). The history narrated in the texts begins with the Yarlung Dynasty, and is followed by the civil war, the rise of Sakya hegemony (during the Chinese Yuan Dynasty) and the period of Kagyu power, up to the rise of the Gelug-pa and the lineage of the Dalai Lamas. If textbooks represent 'whose knowledge is of most worth' (Apple 1992: 4), in the case of Tibetan textbooks, it shows the importance of Buddhism and Central Tibet in imagining a Tibetan national identity within the official discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. This, again, reflects how education becomes an apparatus by which the dominant power re-confirms what is most central and what is marginalised. Some may therefore, argue that this particular focus on Central Tibet indicates that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile favours the regional identity of U-Tsang over that of Kham and Amdo in its official discourse. This is true. However, I suggest that the U-Tsang centred representation of Tibetan history is also related to the struggles between the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Chinese Government for their political ideologies, over the past decades.

As discussed in the previous part, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has debated the historical 'facts' of the status of Tibet with the Chinese Government. In this contest,

both sides have drawn upon the sources which they believe can best validate their national concerns. As a result, those events which reveal the relationship between the two political regimes are emphasised by both sides, for example, the alliance between the Yarlung Dynasty and the Tang Dynasty, and the relationship between the Sakya hegemony and the Yuan Dynasty. These Tibetan political regimes were all developed in Central Tibet. Most of them did not extend their political control from U-Tsang to the entire regions of Kham and Amdo (Anand 2000; Goldstein 1994; Houston & Wright 2003; Kolas 1996; McGranahan 2010; Richardson 1984; Samuel 1982; Smith 1994). However, given the fact that they were influential in their political power, and that they had engaged in dialogues with the Chinese dynastic governments, they have been selected by both side as the factual basis on which to defeat their opponent's claims and validate their own legitimacy. In view of this, I suggest that portraying the rise of Central Tibet as representative of Tibetan history as a whole should also, to a certain extent, be considered as the result of the struggle between the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Chinese Government for their legal rights over Tibet.

Apart from their focus on Central Tibet, it is found that the *Tibetan Readers* texts are mostly in accord with the chronicles written by Buddhist historians, and therefore the Bon version of Tibetan history is almost entirely neglected. For example, the history of Zhangzhung, which is regarded by the Bonpo monastics as being the golden age of pre-Buddhist Tibetan history (see Chapter II), is entirely absent in the lessons on 'History'. In addition, when considering the events which may be narrated differently in terms of Bon and Buddhist literatures, the textbooks usually favour the Buddhist versions. For example, the Bon and Buddhist literatures narrate the origin of the first Yarlung king differently (see Karmay 1998: 240-244). While the Buddhist historians describe the first Yarlung king as an Indian prince, Bonpo chronicles describe him as a divine descendent from the sky (*lha sras*) (Cutler 1991; Karmay 1998: 240-244; Richardson 1998: 124-125; Stein 1972: 47-49).[69] In the *Tibetan Readers* however,

[69] The Bon texts indicate that, after the first seven kings finished their reigns, they returned to the sky via a ladder (*dmu skas*) and left no body behind. However, the eighth king came into conflict with his Bonpo priest and his ladder was cut during the battle. As a result, he became the first king to leave his corpse on earth. Since then, tombs for the kings were built and the tradition of burial rites began (Bjerken 2001; Karmay 1998; Kværne 1985, 2002b; Stein 1972). In the Bon texts, this king is also described as the first king who persecuted the Bon religion.

only the Buddhist version is presented.[70] Furthermore, as many Bonpo monks have pointed out in criticism, when considering the history of Yarlung, textbooks completely neglect those kings who are emphasised in the Bon literature as being patrons of the Bonpo priests and the Bon religion. Instead, the texts emphasise the kings who were credited with contributing to the spread of Buddhism, for example, the three Dharma Kings (*chos rgyal*). These representations reflect that, although the textbooks have shown their intention to integrate the Bon religion into their narratives, they are still dominated by a Buddhist perspective, and thereby, place the voices of the Bonpo on the margin.

However, according to many Bonpo monks and some settlers (mostly of the second generation), the representations of Bon in the textbooks of 2007-2008 are 'better' than those of the 1960s-1980s. Between the 1970s and the early 1990s when they studied at the CST schools, there was only a short lesson in the *Tibetan Readers* introducing the Bon religion. Also, as they emphasised, this lesson did not represent the Bon religion in accordance with the perspective of the Bonpo. Given that the lesson was written by Buddhist monks, the Bonpo believed that it reflected a 'bias' on behalf of Buddhists in respect of the Bon religion. As they recalled, this lesson associated the early form of Bon with the practice of a group of priests who conducted funeral rituals for the Yarlung kings (see also Kværne 1985). Also, the lesson stated that Bon as an organised religion developed only after Buddhism was introduced to Tibet, and therefore, contemporary Bon religion has many similarities with Buddhism.

As discussed in Chapter II, Bonpo and Buddhist monastics had debated the origin of Bon and the relationship between their religions for centuries. However, it was not until exile, when Buddhism was adopted by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile as representative of Tibetan culture, that the contest between the two religions was transformed into a struggle for their political legitimacy in the Tibetan national identity. In the 1960s, when Bon had yet to be recognised by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, it was wholly neglected in the school curriculum. It was not until the late 1970s, when Bon was formally included in the Tibetan

[70] In the lesson 'Early History of Tibetan Society' (Chapter 2, Year 6), it is stated that the first Yarlung king was from the royal family of an Indian Dynasty. When he travelled to Tibet, he was mistaken by Tibetans as having descended from the sky, and was asked to become the king of Yarlung.

Government-in-Exile, that a chapter on the Bon religion was added to the textbooks.[71] However, as mentioned, at that time, the lesson depicted Bon as a rival of Buddhism, and accorded with the traditional ways in which Bon was represented by Buddhist monks.

It was not until the 1990s that, in response to increasing criticism from the Bonpo monks, the DOE agreed to make some changes in the content. The DOE therefore asked the Bonpo monks to write the lesson about the Bon religion. As the Bonpo monks in Dolanji remarked, "*The DOE promised us that they would accept everything we wrote, and they would not change a word of it.*" In addition, given that some complaints were also raised from Buddhist denominations, the DOE decided that the lessons concerned with religious philosophies (Chapters 13-18, *Tibetan Reader,* Year 7) would be written by the monks of each respective denomination. As a result, the Bonpo monks composed two lessons which are now included in the *Tibetan Readers*: 'The Tradition of Yungdrung Bon' and 'The Philosophy of the Bon religion'. This reform of the *Tibetan Reader* in 1994 echoes what Mao (2008) has proposed, that curriculum reform usually indicates that a society is modifying its political and cultural boundary assertions to fulfil the demands of social needs from internal and external 'others'.

'The Tradition of Yungdrung Bon' is placed under the category of 'Religious History'. This lesson centres on the life stories of Tonpa Shenrab. It briefly introduces his teachings, his visit to Tibet, and how his teachings were introduced into Tibetan society during the Zhangzhung period. The lesson also mentions that, during the reign of the early Yarlung kings, the Bon religion not only enjoyed the patronage of the royal families, but it was also popularly believed and practiced by the ordinary Tibetan population. Seven lessons (Chapters 8-14) follow this structure, in introducing the life story of Shakyamuni. These representations show that the introduction of the founder of Bon is given a relatively limited space compared to that of Buddhism. Given this, the Bonpo monks intended to include all the important characteristics of the Bon religion in this chapter. As a result, this lesson appears to simply summarise the key points relating to the relationships between Bon and

[71] A textbook revision committee comprising four members was organised in 1975 to revise the Tibetan school textbooks from kindergarten to Year 8 (Information Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama 1981: 26). The revised textbooks were published in 1978.

Zhangzhung, between Tonpa Shenrab and Tibet, and between the Bon religion and the Yarlung Dynasty.

According to the teachers (who were Buddhists) who had taught this lesson in the CST Dolanji, they usually only read through the text without explaining too much because, in their terms, they were not Bonpos and they were afraid that they would explain the content incorrectly to the students. These teachers however, would tell the students that if they wanted to know more about the histories of Bon, they should ask the monks in the monastery. Considering what we have discussed about the way the Bonpo students engaged with the lesson on Tonpa Shenrab and those on Shakyamuni, we find that although the Bonpo monks had made efforts to include the knowledge of Bon in the curriculum, they still faced difficulty in ensuring the students understood the importance of such knowledge. This situation, as will be discussed later, has prompted the Bonpo monastics to rely on other opportunities and resources in order to instil the history and knowledge of Bon in the minds of the younger generation.

Apple argues that textbook knowledge is significant because it signifies who has the power to decide the way that reality is viewed, whose values matter, and who controls the way that resources are selected and organised (1992: 4-6). As he has put it, it is usually from the struggles by the marginalised over textbook knowledge that an unequal relationship between those who are dominant and those who are on the margins is manifested, and by which the interconnection between education and power becomes visible. The same argument has also been proposed by Weninger and Williams (2005) in their examination of the way that Hungarian textbooks represent minorities. Weninger and Williams argue that although textbook knowledge provides minorities with an opportunity to understand their positioning in the national discourse, it usually only reproduces and re-enhances the marginal situation of minorities. When we consider the case of the Bonpo, it is found that by struggling to have their voices included in the curriculum, the Bonpo had significantly modified their marginal situation in both the official discourse and in society. However, as noted, in the textbooks of 2007-2008, the narratives of ‘Tibetan’ history are still dominated by the perspective of Buddhism. This means that the unequal power relations between the Bonpo and the Buddhists are continued and, to a certain extent, reproduced and re-affirmed via the process of schooling.

My Land and My People: the Dalai Lama as a 'Summarising Symbol'

The students of Years 9 to 10 have the autobiography of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People* (*ngos kyi yul dang ngos kyi mi mangs*) (1962) as their history textbook. This book, written by the Dalai Lama two years after he fled Tibet, describes his childhood, how he was chosen to be the fourteenth Dalai Lama, and his education in the monasteries. Moreover, a large proportion of this book is concerned with the relationship between Tibet and China. It depicts the country-to-country relationship between Tibet and China through many historical events, including the Chinese invasion of Tibet in the 1950s, and the subsequent negotiations between the Lhasa Government and the Chinese leadership. The accounts also explain why he decided to flee, and how he managed to cross borders into India.

Additionally, in *My Land and My People*, the Dalai Lama includes a great deal of description of Tibetan life prior to the 1950s, and also, the belief in Buddhism. These parts have been particularly emphasised by my informants in Dolanji, who (including the school teachers and students) remarked that it was because of these descriptions that this book had been adopted as their textbook. Some of the girls who were studying in Years 9 and 10 told me that they had learnt from the Dalai Lama (via *My Land and My People*) about Tibetan life in Tibet before 1959, and how to be generous towards their families, friends and even their enemies. According to school teachers, this book, which was composed directly by the Dalai Lama, provides a rich source of Tibetan history, politics and religious values. As such, they believed that it had imparted the 'best' model of the Tibetan way of life to the next generation.

Moreover, it is interesting to find that even Bonpo monks, who usually criticised the dominant role of Buddhism in textbook representations, expressed their agreement on *My Land and My People* being the school textbook. According to them, the book is important for two reasons. First, it uses simple sentences and concise terms to introduce complex historical 'facts' and profound religious theories. This provides younger students with an easier access to the profound knowledge of history and religion, and also offers an excellent model in terms of how to write. Secondly, although Buddhist values and ideas are emphasised by this book, they are considered by the Bonpo monks to be shared by the Bon religion too, and as being important knowledge for everybody. Dugpa, who had just graduated from the Menri dialectic school in 2008, remarked,

> "*He talks about how to be a good person and how to live a good life. This is very important knowledge for everyone. Even in the monastery we are learning it everyday. When students read it and think that these words are from the Dalai Lama, they are encouraged to really keep those values in mind. This is a very positive influence, and very important"*.

From the perspectives expressed by the students, teachers and the monks regarding the value of this book, we note that although their opinions are diverse in a sense, they all consider this book as the manifestation of some aspects of Tibetan identity. This echoes what we had discussed in Chapters III-IV, that the Dalai Lama has become a 'summarising symbol' for the Tibetan exiles (Ortner 1973: 1340), integrating and expressing core aspects of Tibetan history, Tibetan culture, and Tibetan national identity all at once. I argue that, by using the Dalai Lama's autobiography as the textbook for higher classes, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile is attempting to re-confirm the central role played by the Dalai Lama in manifesting every aspect of Tibetan identity. By translating the memories of the Dalai Lama ('my memories') into the collective memories of all Tibetans ('our memories'), not only the leadership of the Dalai Lama but also the idea of the Tibetan nation is re-affirmed in the minds of students via the process of schooling.

Religious Teachers and Knowledge of Bon

In terms of the DOE, each CST school should have at least one religious studies teacher, who provides the students with religious knowledge outside the school curriculum (Nowak 1984: 81-82). However, in practice, this rule is flexibly applied in terms of the situation of each CST school. For example, there had been no religious studies teacher in the CST Dolanji for several years (from the late 1990s to 2007). It was not until November 2007 that a Bonpo monk was appointed as the religious studies teacher for the CST Dolanji. This appointment was requested by the settlement leadership and approved by the CTSA. Yung Drung, in his early thirties, was in his final year at the Menri dialectic school, and had been appointed to this position. According to Yung Drung, because the religious studies teacher is responsible for transmitting religious philosophy, religious history and religious tradition, this position is limited to monks who have completed, or nearly completed, their dialectic studies. Yung Drung was born in Dolanji, and grew up in Menri

monastery. He finished his 5th grade in the CST Dolanji, and joined the dialectic school in the monastery. After two years of studies in the dialectic school, Yung Drung enrolled at the CIHTS when the Bon branch was set up. He completed a M.A. degree in the CIHTS, and returned to Dolanji to continue his dialectic education.

Unlike other subjects, there is no standard curriculum prescribed by the DOE for the religious studies teacher. This means that religious studies teachers are given the space to design their own curriculum, though this should be related to religious knowledge. This flexibility in curriculum allows the religious studies teachers to modify their teachings in accordance with local contexts, for example, the denominational interests of the settlement population. In some schools, for example, the CST Dolanji, the religious studies teacher is expected by the settlement population to focus on their denominational tradition, which is consciously played down by the school textbooks. Moreover, it should be noted that the religious studies teacher is usually from the same denomination as the majority of the school students. For instance, in a settlement where most of the population are followers of Nyingma-pa, the religious studies teacher would be selected from the Nyingma-pa monasteries. According to Yung Drung, this unwritten regulation is applied to avoid denominational conflicts between religious studies teachers and settlers, and also, to address the main concerns of the students' parents. Reflecting on these characteristics, I suggest that the religious studies teacher plays a role in bridging and negotiating between the official knowledge represented in school textbooks and the denominational diversity in social reality. This can be further understood from the role played by the religious studies teacher in Dolanji.

The monks and some of the settlers recalled that in the 1970s-1990s, at which time school textbooks presented the history of Bon from the perspective of Buddhism, monks from Menri monastery had been appointed as religious studies teachers to the CST Dolanji. According to them, the neglect of Bonpo religious knowledge in textbooks was a source of significant concern among the monks and a number of lay adults. They feared that the next Bonpo generation would receive the 'wrong' knowledge of their own religion, and be assimilated into the Buddhist perspective. As a result, Menri monastery actively appointed monastics to the school to teach students Bon prayers, Bon mantras, the way of prostrating themselves, and the way

of making basic daily offerings.[72] In addition, these religious studies teachers also gave talks detailing the distinctions between Bon and Buddhism.

Some of the older settlers told me that they did not know much about the Bon religion, so they could not tell their children what it meant to be a Bonpo, and why they believed in a different founder to Buddhism. However, by having the Bonpo monks teach the students, they felt assured that their children would at least receive some 'proper' knowledge of Bon from their own clergy. A few of the monks stressed that, compared to the minor differences represented in the four Buddhist denominations, the distinctions between Bon and Buddhism are vital, and therefore, they should not be 'misrepresented.' This had been the main reason why the Bonpo monastics had negotiated with the DOE in the 1980s for the reform of school textbooks.

In 1994, the new version of the *Tibetan Readers* was released, in which the Bonpo monks had written the chapters on Bon. This means that, the Bonpo are now determining the way that knowledge of Bon is introduced in the curriculum, though the space they are given is still limited. Not long after the release of the revised *Tibetan Readers*, the religious studies teacher in the CST Dolanji was withdrawn. It has been stated by some monks that the absence of a religious studies teacher from the late 1990s onwards, was because most of them had been occupied with dialectic training at the monastery, and had no time to teach in the school. However, I suggest that this withdrawal of the religious studies teacher may also relate to the release of newly edited *Tibetan Readers*, which eased the worries of the monks and reduced the importance of the role played by the religious studies teacher. However, why did the settlement leadership request the CTSA again for a religious studies teacher in 2007?

According to Yung Drung, this request was based on the consideration expressed by many monks that the representation of Bon in schoolbooks was still limited, and sometimes confusing. As discussed earlier, although two chapters on Bon have been added to the *Tibetan Readers*, the knowledge of Bon remains marginalised, especially when it is compared to Buddhism. Moreover, as some monks have pointed out, it is mentioned in some of the lessons based on *Social Studies* (2007-2008) that

[72] In 2007-2008, the Bon prayer was still part of the daily school assembly at the CST Dolanji.

Bon was the origin of certain Tibetan traditions, for example, the ritual of purification (Lesson 5, Year 3) and Tibetan medicine (Lesson 9, Year 6). However, the way the texts represent Bon is ambiguous, and, according to the Bonpo monks, they have caused some students to confuse Bon with Buddhism.[73] These ambiguities, which remain within the textbooks in use, reflect the fact that, from the 1990s, although the voice of the Bonpo had gained more attention from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, they were still being marginalised in many respects, and textbook knowledge is revealed to be one of them. Apart from the ambiguities in textbook narratives, a few monks expressed worry that the teachers in the CST Dolanji, who were mainly Buddhists, could not properly explain Bon teachings and philosophy in their classes. In view of these concerns, Yung Drung was appointed to be the religious studies teacher from 2007.

However, it is interesting to note that Yung Drung played a slightly different role to the previous religious studies teachers. As a religious studies teacher, Yung Drung was supposed to give the Bonpo students after-school classes on the Bon religion. However, as noted, he was requested by school teachers to help teach the sections on 'Philosophy' and 'Religion' in the *Tibetan Readers*. Also, he was scheduled to teach the *Tibetan Reader* to Year 6, and sometimes, teach the Tibetan language to Years 1-3. Most adult settlers were happy to know that a Bonpo monk had begun to teach in the school. Some, in their late forties and early fifties, told me that the settlement office should have requested the CTSA for a religious teacher a long time ago. Tsochok, who had been the religious studies teacher in Dolanji in the 1980s when he was still a monk, stressed that if knowledge of Bon was not continued in the next generation, the Bonpo would one day become like sand scattered among the wider Buddhist population.

According to Yung Drung, given that the school had rescheduled him to teach classes on Tibetan and based on the *Tibetan Readers*, he did not have time to conduct

[73] For example, in 'Tibetan Medicine,' it is stated, "*When we trace the origin of Tibetan medicine, it can be traced to the Bonpo traditions. The Bonpo preserve and maintain the oldest traditions of Tibet*" (*Social Studies* Year 6: 132). However, a statement is added placing the relationship between Bon and Buddhism in ambiguous terms. As it is says, "*It has been generally understood that Tonpa Shenrab existed at the same time as Buddha Shakyamuni*" (*ibid*). This representation may be based on an attempt to allow the teachers and students, and also, the Bonpo and the Buddhists, to interpret the meanings in terms of their own religious identities. However, according to Bonpo monks, these statements confuse both Bonpo and Buddhist students about the relationship between their religions.

after-school classes on the Bon religion. However, he tried to integrate a knowledge of Bon into his teaching, particularly when he taught the chapters on Bon. It is important to note that although the role played by Yung Drung was different from previous religious studies teachers, it still reflects the adaptation of religious studies teachers to the immediate needs of the settlement context. As can be seen, by assisting with the teaching of religious philosophy and history, Yung Drung integrated what he had learnt from the Bon monastery into his textbook presentation, and transmitted his interpretation of Buddhist historical narratives to the students. Unlike the previous religious studies teachers who had introduced Bon studies in classes which were separate from the regular curriculum, Yung Drung taught his knowledge of Bon via the school curriculum. This is significant because the Bonpo students were then being taught the contents of the curriculum set up by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, as interpreted by a Bonpo monastic. Given this, I suggest that the role played by Yung Drung may have brought benefits in instructing the next generation in a Bonpo view of Tibetan history and culture.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that schooling and power are interconnected, and the construction of a textbook curriculum reflects and reveals a political process in selecting and negotiating whose knowledge is worthy to be transmitted into the public memory and how it should be presented. By focusing on the *Social Studies, Tibetan Readers,* and *My Land and My People* textbooks, this chapter has explored how the official knowledge of Tibetan society, culture, and history, and the political situation of Tibetans today is translated and transmitted via schooling to the younger Tibetan refugees. The findings demonstrate that in the process of constructing knowledge for a Tibetan national identity, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile is constantly engaging with external and internal 'others.' While the images of 'who they are' and 'what they said' are emphasised in order to manifest a contrast between 'us' and 'them,' internal diversities in regional and religious identity are played down and subsumed to a shared Buddhist heritage. As argued, this dominant control of Buddhist ideology in framing official knowledge of the Tibetan identity has become most visible when the Bonpo have struggled to have their religious knowledge included in the curriculum. By reflecting on the way the Bonpo negotiate to have their voice included in the curriculum, I argue that textbooks are not only utilised by

the dominant power to demonstrate their political legitimacy with external 'others,' but they also become an important device by which the marginalised negotiate for their political legitimacy within the official discourse on national identity. However, as represented in the case of the Bonpo, their negotiation for recognition of their religious knowledge in formal schooling is still limited by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Given this, the next chapter will focus on other opportunities the Bonpo monastics have developed outside schooling to help Bonpo students learn about their religious traditions.

Chapter VI
Renegotiating Bon Identity: the Younger Generation

In Chapter V I concluded that although a Bonpo voice has been included in the curriculum since 1994, they remain on the margins. In addition, judging by way that Bonpo students engage with lessons on Bon, and the way that Buddhist teachers teach these lessons, significant gaps exist in the provision of teaching, and in student knowledge, in terms of the Bon tradition. The need to provide a more effective education in relation to Bon studies, and to establish a medium between this knowledge and the students, has provided the impetus for Bonpo monastics to create new opportunities for students to learn about Bon religion and history from their clergy. One example of this can be found in the newly appointed religious studies teacher, Yung Drung, at the CST Dolanji, in the way he focuses on instilling a more informed Bon identity in his students, via his teaching of the curriculum laid out in the *Tibetan Readers* textbooks. However, what about those Bonpo students who are studying outside of Dolanji?

We have noted previously that many students went on to continue their studies at the CIHTS and other CST schools after finishing their primary or middle school education in Dolanji. We also noted that in the CIHTS, where denominational divisions can easily be recognised among students, many Bonpos, such as Karma (see Chapter IV), had experienced being overtly discriminated against by their Buddhist classmates in the 1990s. Moreover, it was found that some students, such as Gyaltsen (Chapter IV), who had studied at other CST schools where denominational differences had been played down in favour of an emphasis on Buddhism as the basis of a shared Tibetan heritage, seemed to have no idea about what it means to be a Bonpo. Did these situations worry the Bonpo monastics, and if they did, what was their response?

This chapter focuses on a summer workshop called ‘Droling’ (*bgro gling*), which means ‘discussion’ or ‘debate’, held annually by Menri monastery, since 2000, for second and third generation Bonpo settlers. The main purpose of this workshop is to teach young Bonpo a basic knowledge of Bon doctrines and history, and provide them with an opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion about the Bon

religion. The workshop has been held during the summer, at which time many students return to Dolanji for their summer holidays. Lectures are presented by monastics covering different aspects of the Bon religion, and the topics are revised on a yearly basis in order to fulfil the needs of the younger generation, as identified by the monastic leadership. This workshop has been regarded by Bonpo monks as being an important medium in which they can teach students what it means to be a Bonpo, and the important attributes of their religion. For many laity, mostly from the second generation, this workshop has also provided them with an opportunity to learn the answers to the questions often asked by Buddhist classmates about Bon. By examining the Droling workshop, which I observed and in which I participated in June 2007, this chapter aims to understand how it may reflect the present circumstances of the Bonpo in the Tibetan community in exile; how subject matter was selected and interpreted by monastic lecturers; and how Bonpo students engaged with what they learnt in the workshop.

Droling (*bgro gling*): Annual Summer Workshop

Background

This next section will examine the context in which Droling was first formed, in 2000. The discussion is centred on the experiences of two Bonpos, one of whom, Yonten, had studied at the CIHTS in the early 1990s, and the other, Tsewang, who had studied at the CST Shimla, also in the early 1990s. According to the Bonpo monks, the Droling was held in response to a request by Bonpo students, who had left Dolanji for further studies in other Tibetan settlements and expressed to the monastery their desire to learn more about Bon history and culture. In view of this, I think it is important to understand the situation faced by Bonpo students in the years leading up to 2000.

Yonten

Yonten, a gracious man aged 36, runs a Tibetan restaurant in Assam with his wife, also a Bonpo. I met him in the settlement office when he returned to Dolanji for the visit of Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (the director of the settlement committee, see Chapter I) in July 2007. I was talking with Rinchen, the settlement representative, about the population and the layout of the settlement, when Yonden walked into the office. Yonten had been Rinchen's best friend since they were little. Rinchen

introduced me to Yonden, who started to ask me about my research and what I planned to do in Dolanji. Yenden was interested in my topic about the struggle of the Bonpo for their religious identity in exile, and was willing to share his experience of studying at the CIHTS. In Chapter IV I have discussed that in the CIHTS students are divided into six branches according to their denominational affiliation, and Bon is one of them. However, when the Tibetan Government-in-Exile established the CIHTS in 1967, there was no Bon division. It was not until the Dalai Lama's request in 1990 that a Bon division was added to the CIHTS, and that five students from Dolanji were recruited as the first group of Bonpo to study there. Yonten was one of them, and the only layman among the five. He completed his secondary and higher secondary education at the CIHTS. In our conversations, he remembered the days when he was at the CIHTS:

> "*At that time, people from other sects had no idea about Bon and Bonpo. Their parents and other teachers had told them that the Bonpo didn't have a good mind because they sacrificed animals. So when they saw us, they didn't want to eat with us and they said that Bon was a bad religion. When they said this to us, we also said to them that their religion was not good, and that ours was better. In my class there were 7 [Buddhist] monks from the South [India]. We debated with each other all the time, in the classes and also in our rooms. In ancient Tibet everyone believed in the Bon religion. It was during the time of King Songtsen Gampo that Buddhism came. So I said to the Buddhists that their religion came after mine. They said that all of our scriptures were copied from their religion. Then we replied that their monastic dress copied the dress of our Bon monastics. We told them that they worshipped the golden Buddha, but that the golden Buddha did not wear these kinds of robes. Tibetan monks wear very different robes, taken from our Bon tradition*".

Yonten explained that when he first met his Buddhist classmates, he did not have much knowledge about the Bon religion. He learnt most of what he knew from his Bonpo classmates from Menri monastery, who knew how to debate with Buddhists about the relationship between their respective religions. Yonten's experience at the CIHTS parallels what was recalled by others. Many of them, such as Karma, were enrolled at the CIHTS 7-8 years later than Yonten, but still experienced being marginalised by the Buddhist students.

According to Yonten and Karma, student life outside classes at CIHTS was usually centred on their denominational divisions. Even when they joined school clubs, they were still divided into subgroups in terms of their denominations. Hence, there was a propensity for tension and quarrels to emerge between Bon and Buddhist students, especially when some of the Buddhist students would begin asking Bonpo students questions about their religion. In the early 1990s, there were more monks than laity from Dolanji enrolled at the CIHTS. According to Yonden, most of these Bonpo students had enough knowledge to discuss their religion with Buddhist students. However, from the mid and late 1990s, the number of lay students increased, many of whom had little idea about the relationship between Bon and Buddhism. Karma admitted that he usually felt 'awkward' and sometimes, 'guilty', when his Buddhist classmates asked him '*Are Bonpo Buddhists? [bon po nang pa red pas]*' and he did not know how to answer it. These experiences at the CIHTS were reported back to Menri monastery, when they returned to Dolanji for their school holidays. Moreover, the monastic leadership also noted that some of those who had studied at other CST schools faced a similar situation. Tsewang was one of these students, having studied at the CST Shimla.

Tsewang

I knew Tsewang from the very beginning of my fieldwork, when I visited the BCH (the Bon Children's Home) where he had worked for several years as the secretary. Tsewang was six years younger than Yonten. He had many opinions about the status of the Bonpo in the Tibetan community in exile. He often remarked that, from his perspective, from the time his parents had fled into India (in 1960), the Bonpo had been viewed as internal 'others' and consciously 'discriminated' against by the Buddhist majority. Tsewang often drew upon his experience of studying in years 6 to 8 at the CST Shimla (in the early 1990s), in order to illustrate the marginal situation of Bonpo among Tibetan refugees. According to him,

> *"In our class only 4-5 students were Bonpos. Most of my Buddhist classmates didn't know what Bon was and who the Bonpo were, and in the classes the teachers said many negative things about Bon. Teachers liked to compare Bon with Buddhism, and Bon was usually the bad religion. For example, teachers told us that the Bon religion had rituals of animal sacrifice whereas Buddhism didn't. So, even though I became good friends*

with my classmates, deep down I still felt that they saw us [the Bonpo] a bit differently, I mean, treated us as a bit lesser. To be honest, I had a very tough time in Shimla. Now the situation for the Bonpo is better, but before we were discriminated against by many Buddhists for a long time. I know this word 'discrimination' sounds very strong, but this is actually what I felt and many Bonpo faced".

Tsewang said that when he was in Shimla, he did not know enough to defend his own religion against statements levelled by the Buddhist students, especially when the teachers talked negatively about Bon in class. Therefore, when he finished his studies and returned to Dolanji, he started to ask the monks about the history of Bon. As he said, "*I felt if I knew more about our religion, I could have defended myself when my teachers and classmates said something bad about Bon*". Tsewang's experience might reflect the inadequate coverage of Bon in textbooks, prior to the curriculum reform in 1994, during which time the *Tibetan Readers* textbooks, according to many Bonpos, presented Bon as a rival of Buddhism and associated it with negative values which contravened Buddhist teachings.

These two examples illustrate the situation that many Bonpo students faced when they studied in other Tibetan settlements in the 1990s. One may ask that, if Bonpo students had faced so much discrimination during the early 1990s (and even before) according to the testimony of laity and monastics alike, why were extra measures, such as the Droling workshop, not taken at a much earlier point? The answer perhaps lies in the statements given by Yonten and Karma about studying at CIHTS. According to the Bonpo monks, it was not until the mid to late 1990s that more laity went to other schools for further studies, and the monastic leadership started to note that many Bonpo students were asked questions about their religion by the Buddhist students. Some monks admitted that it was in fact because the students studying at the CIHTS had asked the monastics for help that they began to consider organising a workshop. According to Yonten, in the CIHTS, the denominational divisions had created a competitive atmosphere between students of different denominations. Some Bonpo students felt that, if their knowledge of their religion was weak, they may be looked down on by the Buddhists. That was why many Bonpo students in the CIHTS requested that Menri monastery provide them with extra courses on religion.

Moreover, the new edition of *Tibetan Readers* in 1994 also prompted monastics to provide extra lectures for the students. As Geshe Gelek has mentioned, it was in writing the lessons on Bon for the new textbooks that many monks realised how limited textbooks were in terms of offering sustained opportunities for learning about the Bon religion. Moreover, the lessons were relatively short, and the content condensed many important ideas which required further explanation as well as related historical context. As a result, with the help of the Bonpo monastic lecturers at the CIHTS and the monks from Menri monastery, the first Droling began in 2000. The next section will briefly introduce the topics discussed at the Droling in the early years, which may reflect a slightly different focus to those presented in 2007. This difference, as will be argued, illustrates that the monastic leadership has been modifying its pedagogical strategies, in accordance with the needs of the students.

The Droling in its early years

The first Droling was held on 23 July 2000 for seven days, and around 30 students attended the workshop (see also 'First Droling of Yungdrung Bon,' in *Bon-sGo*, 2000). Many of these students were like Yonten and Tsewang, they had experienced religious discrimination but had no idea why and how their religion was different to Buddhism. Gyatso, a teacher of Bon philosophy at the CIHTS, participated in the design of courses for the first Droling. He recalled that, the main purpose of the first Droling was to 'correct' the images of Bon which may have been 'misrepresented' in the school textbooks and 'misunderstood' by Buddhists. Therefore, the lectures were designed to tell the students "*the 'real' situation of the Bon religion in Tibetan history*", and "*the 'actual' relationship*" between contemporary Bon and Buddhism. Six lectures were presented in the Droling in 2000 (*Bon-sGo* 2000: 157-160):

1. The difference between Bon (*bon*) and Buddhism (*chos*), and between earlier Bon (*bon*) and Yungdrung Bon (*g.yung drung bon*);
2. Why and how the kings Drigum Tsenpo (*gri gum btsan po*) and Trisong Detsen (*khri srong lde btsan*) persecuted the Bonpo;
3. Why the Bonpo hid their Bon teachings during the persecutions and how these teachings were rediscovered;
4. Why Buddha Tonpa Shenrab has three images: one dressed as a king, one as a monk, and one with no clothes;
5. The formation of the universe;
6. Zhangzhung language: how the Zhangzhung language is used in the Kinnaur and Tibetan dialects.

Apart from the lectures on philosophy, most of these topics were about the relationship between Bon and Buddhism in Tibetan history. According to Yonten and Karma, this was the topic on which questions would usually be asked by their Buddhist classmates, and as Gyatso confirmed, it was also the main point of contention which Bon and Buddhist monastics had been debating for centuries. Gyatso explained that when the Droling had just started, many of the students who attended the workshop asked the monastics why the Buddhists kept saying that Bon was different to Buddhism, and Bon was 'bad'. In replying to this question, the monastic lecturers told the students that the differences between Bon and Buddhism lay in their different founders and different origins. As Gyatso said,

> *"We told the students that it is true that Bon and Buddhism are different, but this difference has nothing to do with black rituals as described by the Buddhists. This difference comes from the fact that Yungdrung Bon [contemporary Bon] originated from Tonpa Shenrab. He is also a Buddha, but existed before Shakyamuni and his teachings contained more sources than Buddhism. We lost many of his original teachings during the persecutions. This sometimes makes it difficult to provide evidence for Buddhists when they ask for it".*

This is why the lecturers taught the students the history of Bon and Buddhism in Tibet. As the monastics remembered, they told the students the history of how the Buddhist kings persecuted those who followed Bon, and how many Bonpos were compelled to convert to Buddhism, whilst at the same time trying to preserve their religious teachings by hiding texts in the caves and high mountains. Some of these texts were rediscovered in the eleventh centuries, at which time the Bonpo had become the minority religion in Tibetan societies, and many people had forgotten that Bon used to be the dominant religion and that it bore the 'roots' of many aspects of Tibetan culture. Tsewang, who attended the first two Droling, recalled that he learnt from the lectures that many of the similarities apparent in Bon and Buddhism today, were in fact based on 'the Bon traditions'. He told me,

> "*You see, Buddha Shakyamuni only wore a one-piece yellow robe. You can see the same style of dress in the monks in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Burma, but not in Tibetan Bonpo and Buddhist monks. Tibetan monks wear half-sleeve robes. We call them stod gag. This kind of monk's robe is only*

worn by Tibetan Bonpo and Buddhist monks. This means that Tibetan monks are based on a different tradition, which we believe is the old Bon culture."

From the Droling lectures of 2000 and the recollections of Tsewang and the Bonpo monks, we find that when the Droling was initiated, it sought to dislodge Buddhism from its dominant position in Tibetan culture and replace it with the Bon religion. By telling the students that it was Bon which provided Tibetan culture with unique elements which distinguished Tibetans from other Buddhist societies, the Bonpo monastics sought to explain to students the importance of Bon as a source of distinctive Tibetan identity. I suggest that in so doing, the Bonpo monastics intended to reverse the centre-margin relationship between Buddhism and Bon which had been created by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and re-produced via textbook knowledge. Moreover, some monks who had lectured in Droling recalled that they sometimes used the old textbooks to illustrate to students how the Bon religion had been 'incorrectly' represented, and why Buddhists had intended to 'misrepresent' Bon.

It is important to note that the Droling has been organised in order to counter the marginal situation which Bonpo students had experienced outside Dolanji. In view of this, I suggest that Droling may have provided a vantage point from which to understand how Bonpo monastics have identified the needs of the next generation in terms of their Bon identity, and how in so doing they selectively attribute qualities to Bon in order to counter the hegemonic position occupied by Buddhism within the discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. In the previous chapter, I have argued that the textbooks published by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile represent a process of selection and standardisation, determining what is worthy to be transmitted and translated into the public memory and how that information is presented. This process can also be observed in the lectures at the Droling, and, as will be discussed, the intention is usually to adjust the lectures to whatever situation is currently being experienced by the Bonpo.

Moreover, I suggest that the Droling, which has acted as a medium between the monastics and the younger laity, exemplifies the process by which monastics are adjusting to modern concepts of education, and modify what they have learned in the

monastery for the purposes of educating the laity. This may be considered to be a response to formal schooling, in which Buddhist monastics have selectively translated their knowledge of religious literature into the textbook narratives. In view of this, I suggest that the Droling illustrates another aspect of the negotiation between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, which is Buddhist dominated. As a response to the hegemony of Buddhist identity in education, in particular, in textbook knowledge, the creation of the Droling demonstrates that the Bonpo leadership has now extended its focus to the next generation, especially the laity, among whom they intend to ensure the continuity of Bon identity. The following section will present the Droling I attended in 2007, exploring the themes in its lectures, the interpretations of lecturers, and the interactions between lecturers and their audiences. The discussion seeks to examine the important attributes of the Bon religion which the Bonpo monastic leadership aimed to impart to the students in 2007, and why.

The Droling in 2007

The Droling in 2007 lasted for 7 days, and ran for about an hour each day. Except for the last day, which was the closing day, the normal routine was for an individual speaker to give a 30-40 minute lecture, followed by a 10 minute question and answer session. Then, the Chair would ask the audience questions related to basic knowledge of Bon and Tibetan society. Outside of the lectures, there were handwriting competitions featuring different styles of Tibetan calligraphic script. The Abbot attended on the first day to give the opening talk and introduce the presenters, and on the last day to award the prizes. In his opening talk, the Abbot told the students, "*Do not feel embarrassed to ask questions, and do not leave with any doubts in your mind*". In 2007, the Droling was held in the conference room of the Tibetan Yung Drung Bon Library, which had been newly completed in April. The Chair throughout the workshop was Norbu, who was also the main organiser for the 2007 Droling.

Usually, the speakers at the Droling are monastics who have either completed, or have almost completed their dialectic training at the Bon monastery. The organiser each year has to meet with the Abbot and the head teacher of the monastery to discuss the year's main topics. After the meeting, the organiser begins by inviting monastics who are specialists in these topics to present lectures. In 2007, four of the six speakers were monastics from Menri monastery, who were expected to introduce

the history and culture of Zhangzhung, and the preliminary practices of Bon. The remaining two presenters were representatives of the Bon religion from the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. One of them graduated from the dialectic school in Menri monastery, and the other was a layman. They were invited to talk about the constitution, the policies, and the running of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

We have noted that when the Droling was initiated, it was particularly targeted at the Bonpo students studying outside Dolanji. However, as Norbu emphasised, Droling are now open to all Bonpos and anyone interested in the Bon religion. According to him,

> "*People who are not Bonpo are always very welcome to join the Droling. They can either inform His Holiness [the Abbot] or their friends in Dolanji, and people here will help to arrange their stay*".

In 2007, the audience consisted of Year 6-10 Bonpo students from the CST Dolanji, students who had returned to Dolanji for their summer holidays, some monks from Menri monastery, and nuns from the nunnery. Also, one student, Dorje, was not Bonpo. Dorje came from a Buddhist family in the Tibetan settlement in South India. He was the classmate of Chime, who was from Dolanji and studied in a college in Chandigarh. Chime and Dorje were good friends, and given that Dorje was interested in the Bon religion, Chime invited him to visit Dolanji and participate in the Droling. According to Chime, when the Droling finished, Dorje told him that he felt very impressed by the lectures, and very happy that now he knew more about the Bon religion

In 2007, more than half of the Bonpo students who attended the Droling were still studying at the CST Dolanji, and only some were attending higher secondary schools or colleges outside Dolanji. These young Bonpos, unlike Yonten, Karma and Tsewang, had not experienced being consciously discriminated against or marginalised by Buddhists in terms of their Bon identity, during their schooling. That is to say, compared to the audience at the Droling in 2000, the audience in 2007 had a slightly different experience of their Bon identity from schooling. If the focus of each Droling is meant to represent the current issues and experiences of Bonpo among the younger generation, what were the main concerns addressed by the monastic leadership in 2007, and how were they delivered in the lectures?

Zhangzhung in Relation to Tibetan Identity

Six lectures were presented in the Droling in 2007:

1. A General Introduction to the Nine Preliminary Practices of Bon;
2. A Brief Introduction to Zhangzhung (Geography and Culture);
3. An Introduction to the Tibetan Constitution-in-Exile;
4. The Lineage System in Early Zhangzhung;
5. The First Three Practices in the Nine Ways of Bon;
6. Current Political Situation of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

One third of the Droling lectures in 2007 were on Zhangzhung. Two Bonpo scholars with backgrounds in monastic training introduced the area, religion, and history of Zhangzhung in terms of what had been narrated in the Bon literature. The lecturers stated that the religion which had prevailed in the area of Zhangzhung was the Bon religion, and that, after the kingdom of Zhangzhung was annexed by 'the Tibetan kingdom' (which is, the Yarlung Dynasty), the culture of Zhangzhung continued via the development of the Bon religion in Central Tibet. By comparing the terms in the language of Zhangzhung (which was said to have been founded on the Bon texts) with those in Tibetan, the speakers illustrated how Zhangzhung had influenced the development of the Tibetan language, as well as many Tibetan 'traditions.'

When introducing the history and culture of Zhangzhung, the lecturers usually drew upon the findings from the Bon texts to explain the traditions, language and history of Zhangzhung. In my opinion, these interpretations imply that the Bonpo monastics tend to regard the Bon religion as being representative of Zhangzhung. These lectures on Zhangzhung echo the findings in Chapter II, which indicated that the second generation, unlike the first generation, recognised the connection between the Shon dance and Zhangzhung, and further, between Zhangzhung and the Bon religion. Considering why second generation Bonpo have learnt about Zhangzhung, I suggest that the Droling may have played a crucial role in imparting knowledge of Zhangzhung and its relationship to Bon. From the first Droling in 2000, Zhangzhung has been emphasised as an important aspect of the Bon religion. According to the Bonpo monastics, the importance of Zhangzhung has been emphasised almost annually in the Droling lectures.

From the textbooks I examined in Chapter V, it was noted that the notion of Zhangzhung has been almost eliminated from the school curriculum (only the

chapter on Bon briefly mentions the connection between Bon and Zhangzhung). This means that the Bonpo students would be left with very little knowledge of Zhangzhung. Given that one of the purposes of the Droling is to supply a knowledge of the Bon religion as a corrective to the 'misrepresentation' and neglect of Bon current in most schoolbooks, it has become an important medium by which the Bonpo monastics have taught about the relationship between Bon and Zhangzhung, and how Zhangzhung has formed an important part of Tibetan history. However, as will be seen, the absence of Zhangzhung in school textbooks seems to add some difficulty for students when seeking to understand the relationship between Zhangzhung and 'Tibet'.

On the second day of the Droling, when the lecturer finished his talk, Dolma, a 15 year old who was studying in Year 7 at the CST Dolanji, whispered to me that she found the lecture very difficult. However, she stressed that she understood why they had to learn about Zhangzhung. She said, "*Because Zhangzhung is very important to our Bonpo*". When I asked her what she had learnt from the lecture and why Zhangzhung was important to the Bonpo, she said, "*In ancient times, Bonpos spoke the Zhangzhung language.*" Moreover, Dolma pointed out that the significance of Zhangzhung lies in its connection to the origins of 'the Bon traditions,' although she was not sure what these 'traditions' were. Dolma's remarks, which emphasised the importance of Zhangzhung to Bon identity, seemed to suggest that she understood the main points of Zhangzhung which the monastics had intended to impart. However, for some students, the connection between Bon and Zhangzhung seemed to raise more questions.

When the lecturer finished his presentation, he asked the students if they had any questions. One of the students asked, "*Are the Bonpo Zhangzhung people [bon po zhang zhung pa red pas]?*" The lecturer answered the question by pointing out that, before the seventh and eighth centuries, many parts of today's Tibet were under the control of the kingdom of Zhangzhung. In the kingdom of Zhangzhung, people believed in the Bon religion, and spoke in the language of Zhangzhung. However, Zhangzhung was later conquered by the Yarlung Dynasty from the east (the east of Central Tibet). Gradually, the people of the Zhangzhung culture, many of whom were followers of Bon, and the people of Yarlung, who were mostly Buddhist, intermixed, to become what are now generally described as Tibetans.

The question raised by the students seem to suggest that some young Bonpos, particularly those who were still studying at secondary school, were confused about the relationship between Zhangzhung, Bon, and Tibet. When the speaker emphasised the connection between the Bon religion and the kingdom of Zhangzhung via the aspects of language, belief, and 'tradition', students were left wondering whether Zhangzhung belonged to 'Tibet,' or whether Zhangzhung was a society separate from the society of 'Tibet.' They were confused as to whether the Bonpo belonged to Zhangzhung or 'Tibet'. Dolma admitted that she also had the same questions. She wondered if it was because Zhangzhung was conquered by the Tibetan kingdom that the Bonpo were now 'Tibetan people'. The students' questions show how little information there is on Zhangzhung in school textbooks, and how influential the hegemony of Buddhist identity is in the way they understand Tibetan national identity.

The content of the *Tibetan Readers* (see Chapter V) shows that the lesson on 'The Tradition of Yungdrung Bon,' in which Zhangzhung is briefly mentioned, is placed under 'Religious History' rather than the category of 'History', which details the political history of 'Tibet' as an independent society. Moreover, in the lessons under 'History', the national past of 'Tibet' is introduced along with the history of Buddhism in Tibet, which places the Yarlung Dynasty (it is phrased as *bod kyi rgyal rabs*, 'the Tibetan kingdom', in textbooks) and its Buddhist kings in the spotlight. This representation neglects other kingdoms and political regimes which had existed at the same time as Yarlung in what is now known as Tibet, for example, Zhangzhung in the West of Central Tibet. Furthermore, it also leads students to consider the Yarlung Dynasty as the only representative of the past in today's 'Tibet', which denominated an independent nation.

Therefore, when Zhangzhung was introduced by the Bonpo lecturer as being a kingdom located next to 'the Tibetan kingdom' in the west, some students understood this as being a 'country' geographically, culturally and politically separated from 'Tibet.' For these students, if Bonpo beliefs and traditions were based in Zhangzhung, it probably meant that the Bonpo belonged to Zhangzhung rather than to Tibet. This is why the question was raised, '*Are the Bonpo Zhangzhung people*', and why Dolma was wondering if Bonpos only became 'Tibetans' when Zhangzhung was incorporated into Yarlung. The struggle by Bonpo students to locate Zhangzhung within their understanding of 'Tibetan' history and 'Tibetan' culture is indicative of

the crucial role played by textbooks in the formation of knowledge. In effect, the absence of Zhangzhung in textbooks has left almost no place for Zhangzhung to be included in the idea of 'Tibet.'

From the lecturer's reply, we can see that he tried to explain that Zhangzhung only contributed part of Tibetan culture, which was represented by the Bon religion. The Yarlung Dynasty however, contributed another part, which was represented by Buddhism. And 'Tibetans', a category which combines both the followers of Bon and Buddhism, are in fact the combination of these two cultures. Some of the monks told me that they thought many of the students were still confused. However, as they also emphasised, if the students could at least understand that Tibetan culture includes both 'Zhangzhung culture' (i.e. Bon culture) and 'Buddhist culture', then the main purpose of the Droling had been achieved. According to these monks, most of the students in the Droling were at a fairly young age. Therefore, it was not surprising that they might confuse what they were taught in the Droling with what they had learnt from their school textbooks. Norbu pointed out that, as the Droling will be held annually, the students will gradually become familiar with the notion of Zhangzhung and its history as they attend more lectures.

Apart from the influence of textbook knowledge, I suggest that the difficulty the lecturers felt in introducing students to the Bon perspective on Tibetan history, to a certain extent, may also reflect the fact that most of the students who attended the Droling in 2007 seemed to have no concept of the difference between Bon and Buddhism. In the past few years, both the Dalai Lama and the school textbooks have tended to downplay the tensions between Bon and Buddhism, and emphasised the overall importance of a national identity over religious differences (Kolas 1996; Nowak 1984). These efforts of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile may have had a positive impact on the life of Bonpo in the Tibetan community in exile. Most students who were studying in other settlements in 2007-2008 told me that they had never experienced discrimination in respect of their Bon identity. However, without the conflicts which had previously arisen in the classroom, and from biased representations in textbooks, the differences between Bon and Buddhism are far less contested, and there is therefore far less awareness of the specifics of Bon identity. It seems that many Bonpo students now tend to confuse Bon conceptually with Buddhism.

According to some of the students who had returned to Dolanji for the summer holiday, Bon was no different to Buddhism except in terms of its founder. Also, when I asked the girls from the CST Dolanji what the differences were between Bon and Buddhism, they told me that there were no differences, and that both groups belonged to the 'Tibetan' people. When I discussed these findings with the Bonpo monastics, many of them mentioned that they had observed the same situation over the last 2-3 years, and that the monastic leadership regarded it as another crisis in the maintenance of the Bon identity in the younger generation. Referring to the Dalai Lama's statement that "*the fate of Tibet is associated with the Tibetan religions*", made when he visited Dolanji (see Chapter IV), Geshe Gelek stressed that Tibetan national identity is always expressed in terms of religious identities. According to him, if the Bonpo want to maintain their religious position within Tibetan national identity, they have to make sure that the next generation maintain some knowledge of their religious difference to Buddhism. The monastics were worried that with more and more Bonpo students convinced there was no difference between Bon and Buddhism, they would gradually be assimilated into Buddhism.

The concerns articulated by the Bonpo monastics indicate clearly that one of the purposes of the Droling in 2007 was to connect Bon identity with national identity, in the minds of students. As Norbu said, the lectures were designed to help young Bonpos to know more about the distinctiveness of their 'Bon traditions,' the importance of Bon to Tibetan culture, and to take pride in their Bonpo identity. Unlike the lectures in 2000, which were intended to 'correct' the misunderstandings which the students had learned from their Buddhist teachers and classmates, the lectures in 2007 seemed to be aimed at trying to instil in students a sense of the distinct differences between the two traditions. For example, the knowledge of Zhangzhung, which represented the different origins of Bon and Buddhism, was increasingly emphasised in 2007, in order to show another important aspect of 'Tibetan' history in addition to the Yarlung Dynasty. The intention to create a sense of differentiation between Bon and Buddhism within the discourse of Tibetan nationalism can also be observed from the lectures of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Positioning the Bonpo in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile

In the Droling of 2007, there were two lectures on the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. One introduced students to the history and the key concerns of the constitution promulgated by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and the other focused on the process by which national policies were discussed and decided by the Government-in-Exile. Both of these two lecturers were members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, and represented the Bonpo in the Tibetan community in exile. One of them had held his position in the 1980s, and the other was a current member of parliament. According to Norbu, given that these two speakers had experience of policy making at a high level, the monastic leadership expected them to help the students understand how the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile functioned. Moreover, the monastics also expected these two lecturers to make the students aware of the status of the Bonpo in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

The lecturers introduced the general context of the political situation of the Tibetan refugees, and how the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has produced a large number of policies for the benefit of the exile communities. In addition, they also mentioned how the Bonpo were being encouraged to claim their religious status through a variety of projects and policies which had been instituted by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Of the two speakers, one was a layman, having retired from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile prior to 2007. In his lecture, he mentioned that, although the importance of Bon had been acknowledged by the Tibetan Constitution-in-Exile in 1977, the Bonpo still had to fight hard for equal status with the Buddhists on many occasions and in relation to a range of national policies. For example, when policy was formulated to channel scholarships to students from different denominations, Bonpo students were initially overlooked. As such, he had to negotiate for Bonpo students to be given access to the same opportunities as Buddhist students. Moreover, he said that he had had a considerable number of arguments with other members of the Parliament-in-Exile, regarding how the Abbot of Menri monastery should be presented in the official ceremonies of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, in respect of the four Buddhist leaders. According to him, given that Bon was the oldest of the five religious traditions, the Abbot should occupy the position next to the Dalai Lama, and the other three Buddhist leaders should be positioned after Bon. However, as he admitted, his suggestion was not

approved by other representatives, and the leaders of the Sakya-pa and the Kagyu-pa still occupy the main positions next to the Dalai Lama, when attending official engagements.

Overall, the lecturers both impressed upon students the nature of their work in negotiating on behalf of the Bonpo communities, and stressed the importance of maintaining the fight for equality of treatment for the Bonpo. The lecturers emphasised that, without their constant efforts and negotiations regarding the unequal treatment of the Bonpo, today's Bonpo would not have been able to enjoy their 'almost equal' status with Buddhists. At the end of their presentations, they reminded the students that the situation for Tibetans was still difficult, and that inside the Government-in-Exile, the Bonpo representatives still had to oversee, and sometimes, negotiate policies to ensure that Bon and the Bonpo were not misrepresented or deliberately neglected. They asked that the students trusted their parliamentary representatives to care for their lives in exile, but emphasised that they should bear in mind that it was their own responsibility to gain sufficient knowledge of their religion in order to maintain their 'almost' equal position with the Buddhist communities.

From these two lectures, it is evident that the lecturers drew upon certain defining characteristics of Bon, such as the historical period in which the Bon religion originated, to illustrate why the Bonpo should be differentiated from Buddhists and how they should be positioned within the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. I suggest that the more the lecturers explored the marginalities applied to the Bonpo by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the more they indirectly urged the students to be aware of, and stand up for, their religious identity. Some of the teenaged girls, such as Dechen and Dolma, told me that they had not known the difficulties the Bonpo had gone through within the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. When they explained the lecturers to me, they said, "*They [the lectures] are fighting very hard for us in the Government*". I asked students how they felt about the 'difficult' situation of the Bonpo which was mentioned by the lecturers. Dawa, a boy studying in Year 6 joked that, "*If a Buddhist says our Bonpo religion is bad, I will tell him our religion is older, and he has to respect me and listen to me, treating me like his elder brother*". Dechen replied that the situation is better now, and she thought there were 'no problems' for Bonpos now.

We find that while the other lecturers instructed the students in the religious and historical aspects of Bon identity, the Parliamentary representatives demonstrated how they had applied their knowledge of Bon to debate and claim equal political rights for the Bonpo from within the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Viewing the six lectures as a whole, it is interesting to note that the lecturers interpreted the importance of religious 'traditions' in relation to concepts such as national identity, citizenship, democracy, and cultural and political rights. By locating their understanding of Bon in the contexts of 'national history' and in terms of the political situation of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the Bonpo lecturers represented the same emphases on 'culture' and 'modernity' that has been made in the official discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. As argued in Chapter V, the content found in school textbooks is representative of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's adoption of the notion of cultural rights, in order to support their claim for an independent nation, and utilises idioms such as democracy, freedom, and self-determination to argue for the political legitimacy of a Tibetan nation. By examining the lectures at the Droling, we find that in resisting their marginal situation in the Tibetan community in exile, the Bonpo leadership uses the same strategies and idioms as the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, in order to frame their interpretation of the importance of Bon identity.

Therefore, the idea of Zhangzhung was emphasised in order to negotiate an equal position for Bon, with respect to Buddhism, within the terms of 'national' history. In addition, the marginal situation of the Bonpo in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was raised in order to remind the students of their right to equal social and political rights in the Tibetan nation. Moreover, the students were told that if they wanted to negotiate for an equal political position with Buddhists within the Tibetan refugee population, they should first understand why their Bon identity is important, and what makes their religious 'traditions' unique and distinct from Buddhism. In so doing, the Bonpo leadership led the students to understand that there was a significant interconnection between the religious, historical, and political aspects of their Bon identity, and that each of these aspects was also correlated with their national identity.

Follow-up Quizzes after Each Lecture

Around 10-15 minutes was allocated for questions at the end of each lecture. Norbu, the Chair, asked the students some questions related to the Bon religion and Tibetan society in general. The following are examples of some of the questions he asked:

1. Who was the first king of Tibet?
2. Who was the first abbot of Menri Monastery?
3. Who was the last king of Tibet?
4. What is the name of the current abbot of Menri monastery?
5. In which Tibetan year was Tenpa Shenrab born?
6. What are the meanings of the symbols on the Tibetan flag?
7. In which Tibetan year did Tenpa Shenrab pass away?
8. In which year was the current abbot of Menri Monastery born?
9. How many Bon monasteries are there now in India?
10. Where did the Bon religion originate?
11. When Tonpa Shenrab came to Tibet, which area did he visit?

When Norbu asked his questions, the students would start to whisper, asking each other if they knew the answers. Most of the girls sitting around me knew the answers immediately. However, they went quiet when Norbu kept asking who could answer. Usually the boys would stand up to answer. After each answer, Norbu would briefly explain the context of the question and remind the students of any related information that was of particular importance. The answers from the students sometimes made the audience laugh. For example, when a boy answered the question on the number of Bon monasteries in India, he counted a nunnery as among them. He explained to Norbu that they should include the nunnery because females deserved the same equal rights as males. The audience laughed, and Norbu praised him, "*very good answer!*" Some monks later told me that they were impressed and that some of the young students "*are very smart*"; they did not passively accept what the teachers had said but had expressed their own opinions and successfully convinced the Chair to accept their ideas. They told me, "*This is what we call 'debate'*".

In terms of the questions posted by Norbu, we find that most of them were concerned with the Bon religion, and in particular, with the founder of Bon and the current situation of the Bonpo in India. However, some of the questions were related to 'Tibet' as an independent nation. Norbu explained to me that most of the questions he

selected were already printed in the school textbooks, and a few of them, for example, the background of the Menri Abbot and Bon monasteries, were related to the lived experience of the Bonpo in India. Therefore, he expected students to know the answers. As he emphasised, "*These are very basic questions, they should have known the answers just by being a Bonpo and a Tibetan.*"

Norbu's explanations indicate that, compared to the lectures, which aimed to provide the students with additional knowledge of their religious and national identities outside what would be provided in school, the quiz questions were designed to determine whether the students had memorised what the school had taught them. The questions about the founder of Bon, the origin of Bon, and the current spiritual leader of Bon were intended to examine whether the young Bonpos could distinguish Bon from Buddhism and articulate basic aspects of their Bon religion. Apart from these, the questions about the kings of Tibet (which referred to the Yarlung Dynasty) and the meanings related to the symbols of the national flag were set to remind the students of the historical and political 'facts' that they should remember simply by being Tibetan.

It is interesting to find that, even in the quizzes, the Bonpo monastics also carefully avoided questions which might refer to Buddhist identity, and consciously directed the students to express their national identity in terms of the Bon religion. For example, the three Dharma kings of Yarlung, who had been highlighted in the textbooks as being key figures in the development of Buddhism, were omitted by Norbu. Instead, Norbu drew the students' attention to the first Yarlung king, who was considered within the Bon literature to be a practitioner and patron of the Bon religion. In the textbooks, the first Yarlung king is described as being the descendent of an Indian king. However, in the Droling, Norbu explained to the students that this king had a special relationship with the Bon religion, and told the students stories of the first seven kings, who were said by Bon literature to be sons descending from the sky (see also Chapter II and V).

The way Norbu selected and explained the questions shows the underlying intention of the Bonpo leadership; to challenge, although indirectly, the Buddhist identity which has been predominant in the official discourse of nationalism. By selectively emphasising some aspects of the historical knowledge supplied by school textbooks,

and by manipulating them to support Bon identity, the Bonpo monastics created an alternate space for the Bon religion to be located in the students' conception of 'Tibetan' history. Moreover, it is found that the Bonpo monastics not only intended to create a space for Bon, but have also tried to shift the focus of Tibetan national identity, from Buddhism to Bon. This intention to challenge their relationship with the dominant majority, and bring changes into the national discourse, might be regarded as being an act of 'resistance'.

Much research has tried to define and deconstruct the notion of resistance and its various forms. For example, Scott's study of peasants in South-east Asia (1985, 1986) illustrates how resistance can be embedded in everyday and individual acts, rather than only open and collective activity opposing the dominant power. Keesing in his ethnography of the Kwaio (1992) suggests that resistance does not always involve confrontation; in the case of the Kwaio, it is produced via 'compartmentalisation', which aims to marginalise and separate that which is dominant. Moreover, Keesing finds that when resisting domination, the Kwaio have reproduced the political structures which have been used to dominate them, in order to focus their struggle. This may echo Roseberry's (1994: 364) statement that "forms and languages of protest *must* adopt the forms and languages of domination in order to be registered or heard". Ortner (1995) however, argues that resistance cannot be simply defined as an opposition of the subaltern/subculture to domination. She maintains that resistance is itself an ambiguous concept, and researchers should pay more attention to the internal politics operating within and between subaltern groups, which adds dynamics and complexity into the meanings of resistance.

In the case of the Bonpo, 'resistance' is not constituted by oppositions, but rather, it is embodied in a process of incorporation and an intention to transform the centre-margin relationship. By examining the lectures given at the Droling, which were designed to resist the marginalisation of the Bon identity in schooling, we find that the Bonpo lecturers had no intention to challenge the correlation between religion and national identity which has taken central place within the official discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Rather, they were aiming at locating their Bon identity within this structure and creating an alternate space which, if not reversing the existing power relations, at least allowed an equal position for Bon in respect of Buddhism, in the representation of Tibetan identity.

It is interesting to note that the way the Bonpo negotiate their religious identity within the Tibetan national discourse parallels the way the Tibetan Government-in-Exile negotiates its national legitimacy within the existing international order. As I discussed in the previous chapters, when resisting the marginality placed on their refugee status by the international order, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile is not intent on challenging or dismissing the importance of the nation. Rather, by framing their discourse in accordance with the national order and establishing a Government-in-Exile which resembles a nation-state, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile emphasises the necessity of a national identity and tries to locate itself within the existing international order. These two cases illustrate that the dominant ideology sometimes might be more profoundly experienced and recreated on the margins, and this may also increase the contradiction existing between the margins and the centre. The next section will compare the way in which the Bonpo conceptualise and negotiate their marginal status in the Tibetan community in exile with other examples, in order to identify the multiple dimensions and various forms of resistance and negotiation which feed the dynamics of the centre-margin relationship.

'Margins as Diagnostic of the Core'

This thesis has argued that it is from the struggles of the marginalised that the unequal power relations between the margin and the centre, and between the minority and the majority, can be best observed. From the various ways the Bonpo struggle to claim the legitimacy of their religious 'traditions', we see that the domination of Buddhism is manifested in every aspect of the life of the Bonpo, from the administration of the settlement, to the commemorations and celebrations of national days, to the construction of knowledge in textbooks and in schooling. Moreover, from the ways that Tibetan refugees engage with the constraints placed on their refugee status by the Government of India, we note the dominance of Indian state power in the everyday life of Tibetans. These aspects point towards the margins, where the dominant power is in contest with the diverse groups contained within it, as the location of a 'dialogical interaction' in which the contradictions embedded in social relationships are constantly examined and redefined. This echoes what Sa'ar (1998) has argued, that margins represent the diagnostic of the core (cf. 1998: 233). As she has put it, it is from the margins, where people have to struggle to have their

voices heard and have their knowledge considered by the centre, that the dominant control of the official ideology and its negotiations with the diversities within it can be well observed.

In her study of Christian Palestinians in Haifa, Sa'ar argues that the margins not only embody the dynamics of the power relations between state, nation and religion, but they also permit the shift of identities and manipulation of resources across different boundaries. As presented in her ethnography, the Christian Palestinians in Haifa are in a Jewish state which refuses to acknowledge their Palestinian identity but only acknowledges their religious affiliation. At the same time, they also belong to a transnational community of Palestinians which seeks to highlight a pan-Palestinian identity over religious division. As a result, the Christian Palestinians in Haifa find that their national and religious identities are conflicting with each other in either situation. However, instead of being trapped by the constraints applied to their dual marginality, Sa'ar finds that in practice, her informants comply with the state and the social orientation whilst, at the same time, manipulating the contradictions embedded in their situation to challenge and modify it (1998: 216). By taking up Bourdieu's concepts of 'habitus' and 'praxis' (Bourdieu 1977: 78), Sa'ar argues that, although the practices of the minority usually reproduce the marginalities designed by the state and national centres, and reinforce the inequality of power relations, they simultaneously provide opportunities for the marginalised to renegotiate their position in society and their relationships with different 'others.' Therefore, although Christian Palestinians remain on the margins of the Israeli state and the Palestinian nation, their stance between these two centres is continuously modified and redefined.

This interplay of powerlessness and empowerment reflected in the practices of the marginalised is also observed by Horstmann (2006) in his study of the border-crossing practices on the Thai-Malaysian borderland. By examining how people from transnational ethnic minorities utilise their dual citizenship to gain benefits in spite of the constraints which are placed on them by more than one state, Horstmann argues that, instead of limiting, the border creates new spaces for the negotiation of identities and manipulation of resources via transnational networks. As he suggests, "In the margin space where one nation-state ends and another begins, local communities play on the ambiguity of identity in the borderland and make use

of their networks across the border as a resource" (2006: 173). While Sa'ar examines the careful attitude revealed in the struggles of people on the margins, Horstmann's ethnography observes how border crossing practices have empowered Muslim and Buddhist ethnic minorities on the Thai-Malaysian borderland. In these two examples, both researchers suggest that the margins are the places where the dynamics of social relationships can best be observed, and where new affiliations and identities are usually developed. Moreover, they also argue that it is from the practices of the marginalised, who struggle to live by the contradictions enacted in their relationship to the centre, and negotiate the location of their identities within the dominant discourse, that the centre is constantly reproduced and reinforced, but is also redefined. These findings of Sa'ar and Horstmann can also be observed in the case of the Bonpo in the Tibetan community in exile.

In this thesis, the assertions made by 'the Bon traditions' have not only developed in response to the marginalisation of the Bonpo by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile; they belongs within the collective practice of the entire Tibetan refugee population, in their struggle to maintain their Tibetan cultural identity against the increasing fragmentation of the diaspora, and under the marginalisation placed on them by the host state. In this context, the political 'others' with which the Bonpo in Dolanji negotiate and assert their identity are not only the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, but include the Government of India, the Chinese Government, and a variety of foreign agencies (Anand 2000; Cech 1987; Kolas 1996; Schrempf 1997). That is to say, the marginal position of the Bonpo in Dolanji is co-created and co-defined by multiple socio-political power relations, some of which are mutually exclusive and some of which overlap. These forces constantly act on the marginalisation of the Bonpo between different communities, but also consistently empower the Bonpo. As represented, instead of being limiting, these multiple factors create a variety of opportunities which permit the Bonpo a certain degree of flexibility in the shift of identities. This flexibility is vitally significant, because it allows the Bonpo to manipulate resources across different state and national borders, into their social, political and educational practices in the Tibetan community in exile, and modify their stance in accordance with different 'others,' both internally and externally.

In the previous chapters, I have mentioned that the Bonpo monastics have cooperated with many foreign scholars to enable research on the origin of Bon, the relationship

between Bon and Zhangzhung, and between 'the Bon traditions' and Tibetan history. With the increase of these Bon studies published in Tibetan and non-Tibetan societies, the Bonpo not only incorporate their foreign 'patronage' into the process of (re)making their Bon identity, but they also adopt these research findings in order to negotiate their power relations with the Buddhist majority in the Tibetan community in exile (Schrempf 1997). Moreover, apart from engaging with foreign 'others,' the Bonpo in Dolanji have also developed 'border-crossing networks' (Horstmann 2006) with the Bonpo communities across different countries, and in particular, those in Tibet, in order to reinforce a broader maintenance of the Bon identity in the Tibetan world. In this process, we find that the Bonpo have utilised their marginal position under Buddhist domination as a force of empowerment for the revival of 'the Bon traditions.' As I discussed in Chapter III, the contradictions embedded in the Bonpo's relationship with the Buddhists and with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile have encouraged the Chinese Government to promote the Bon identity in order to fragment the domination of Buddhism in the Tibetan population. As argued, the intentions of the Chinese leadership not only provide the Bonpo with an opportunity to reinstate their religious traditions in Tibet; they also empower the Bonpo to negotiate their position in the national discourse with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Furthermore, apart from relying on external 'others' to modify their marginal position, as this thesis has explored, the Bonpo have also constantly negotiated with internal 'others,' namely, the Buddhist population, with a multiple range of practices. For example, they have struggled from within the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile to negotiate their political equality with the Buddhist population on official occasions, and in national policies. Additionally, as explored in Chapter II, the Bonpo monastics have worked on the revival of 'the Bon traditions' in religious practices to illustrate the distinction between Bon and Buddhism. Moreover, as presented in Chapter IV, they have also engaged in direct 'dialogues' with the Dalai Lama, who has crucial influence on the Buddhist population and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile; and as discussed in Chapter V, they have worked to have their religious knowledge included in the school curriculum in order to negotiate the equal importance of Bon and Buddhism in the public memory.

Finally, in this chapter, we see that the Bonpo leadership have targeted the Bonpo youth as an important element in the maintenance of the Bon identity in the Tibetan community in exile. The Droling is only one of the examples which illustrate the way in which the Bonpo leadership have struggled to impart the Bon identity to the next generation. Apart from the Droling, an annual journal, entitled Bon-sGo (*bon sgo*, which means the door to Bon), has been published by Menri monastery since 1987 under the supervision of the Abbot. According to the Bonpo monks, this journal is designed to act as a gateway, leading the younger population to engage with multiple aspects of the Bon religion. Therefore, although the articles in this journal are composed by monastics, they are written in a form which can be easily read and understood. The articles of each journal are divided into categories of 'Yungdrung Bon', 'History', 'Culture', 'Poetry' and 'News', introducing religious philosophy, religious history, and the religious practices of Bon. Most of the articles are either centred on excerpts from Bon literature or recent research findings on Bon by monastics throughout the Himalayan area. Moreover, apart from the Bonpo, this journal is also targeted at Buddhist readers. When each new issue is launched, Menri monastery sends a few copies to each of the Tibetan libraries in India, and some to the bookshops in Delhi and other Tibetan settlements for sale.

Conclusion

In the previous chapters, I have argued that the interactions between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile are based on a series of 'dialogues', in which Bonpos' assertions of their Bon identity are usually in response to the way the Tibetan Government-in-Exile represents or 'misrepresents' Bon. The Droling workshop illustrates that the 'dialogues' between the Bonpo and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile have now shifted their focus to the next generation and extended to the realm of education, in which they are negotiating whose knowledge is worthy to be continued and how. Aware of the continuing educational marginalisation of the Bon tradition, the Bonpo leadership have adopted the Droling as an important apparatus by which they can teach Bonpo students what they have to know but what their textbooks fail to provide, in terms of their Bonpo identity. Moreover, the topics taught at the Droling are changed on a yearly basis in order to adjust to the immediate needs emerging from the situation of the Bonpo in education and wider society. The flexibility of the lectures at the Droling represents how the

Bonpo leadership have been modifying their strategies of resistance and negotiation in accordance with any changes to their marginal situation. From the way that Bonpo monastics have negotiated in order to ensure the maintenance of Bon identity within the next generation, I have argued that although resistance usually only reinforces the existing power relations, it also creates the impetus for both the dominant and the marginalised to re-examine and negotiate their relationship. Therefore, although today's Bonpo remain on the margins of the Tibetan community in exile, as long as their 'dialogues' with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile continue, their marginal situation may be constantly modified and redefined.

Plate 21. The text reads, "H.H. the Menri Trizin with the participants of the first Droling of Yungdrung Bon in Dolanji," from *Bon-sGo* 13, 2000

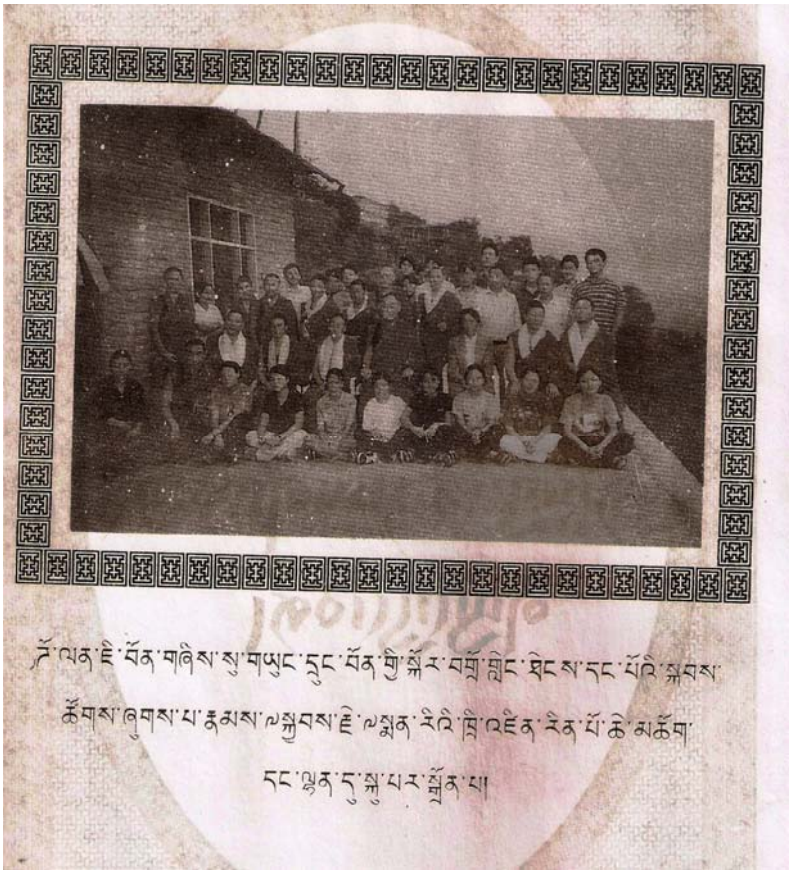

Plate 22. Droling participants in June, 2007

Plate 23. After the lecture, students were asked to draw the area which had once been covered by the kingdom of Zhangzhung

Plate 24. The Abbot and the lecturers at the Droling in 2007

Conclusion

This thesis has set out to understand the marginalised within a refugee community that is also marginalised. As a case study, it enables us to rethink the relationship between the exercise of power and issues of marginalisation, in the construction of the discourses of disapora. I have argued that it is on the margins, where the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are ambiguous and contested, that the fluidity of identity can be most effectively observed and examined. This fluidity of identity permits the marginalised to manipulate both their relationships with different 'others', and the constraints which are placed on them from different social and political forces, in order to gain maximum benefit for their way of life. In this thesis, the Bonpo in Dolanji are not merely passive victims of a two-fold marginality. Rather, they manipulate the resources which are available to them in order to create opportunities and develop new affiliations, which in turn empower their life in exile.

In adapting to their refugee status, the Bonpo have worked hard to create mutually beneficial relationships with the Indian authorities and with neighbouring residents, actions which have contributed to create improved opportunities for the development of the settlement and its Bon monastery. Also, in their struggle against the marginalisation imposed on them by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the Bonpo have utilised a variety of resources, including religious scriptures and scholastic treatises, in order to develop a positive discourse on 'Bon traditions'. In this discourse, they have asserted Bon's status as a repository and living manifestation of authentic, 'indigenous' Tibetan culture, thus challenging the central position long occupied by Tibetan Buddhism. This discourse has not only opened a gateway for the Bonpo to locate their religious identity within the official discourse of Tibetan nationalism, but has also created an opportunity for them to negotiate and work for the development of Bon in Tibet. Moreover, their interaction with foreign sponsors and scholars has served as another important avenue via which the Bonpo have spread their religious teachings, gained support for the development of Bon monasteries and for their discourse on 'Tibetan traditions', and negotiated their relationship with Indian authorities and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

This thesis suggests that, over the past five decades, the Bonpo struggle for their religious identity has in fact been a process of shaping, promoting and defining 'the Bon traditions'. This process by which 'Bon traditions' have been articulated, has been built upon a series of 'dialogues' established between the Bonpo in Dolanji and a number of different internal and external audiences, including Bonpo from different generations and different educational backgrounds, lay and monastic Bonpo, and Bonpo both in Tibet and across the world, Buddhists (lay and monastic), the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the Indian government and society, the Chinese Government, and many foreign patrons. I have argued that it is via their interactions with these various audiences, and through their responses (contesting, negotiating, or reaffirming) to what is asserted by 'others' about Bon and Bonpo, that what it means to be a Bonpo has come to be defined.

In this process of 'dialogical interaction', different resources, old and new, have played a part in the interconnected web of communication and negotiation which has helped bring about maximum benefit for Bonpo in the present day. Therefore, we see that the significance of Zhangzhung has been reinterpreted in the process of re-envisioning Tibetan national identity; the research on Zhangzhung and its 'living traditions', including the 'Zhangzhung' language and the performance of 'Shon' dance, and advanced via the existing Bon literature, has enabled Bonpo to claim equal cultural and political rights in the Tibetan community in exile. Moreover, the Bonpo have also adopted newly developed technology and a variety of media, including the internet (websites), academic periodicals, libraries, school textbooks, and workshops, in order to impart to the public and the next generation knowledge of Bon and the Bonpo. By combining their discourse on 'traditions' with a variety of new media, the Bonpo have created an alternate space which has allowed them to define who they are and what they need, and to take control of their lives within the limitations imposed by their dual marginality.

In this thesis, 'being Bonpo' is not a rigidly defined concept, but rather, is fluid and negotiable. Via the lens of the Bonpo, this thesis has examined the contradictions within the national discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and observed the dynamics enacted in the relationship between different traditions, including regional, religious, and national. It also examines the ambiguities which are played out, and reflected in, the assertions of a national identity in the context of exile. Much

research into the marginalised has intended to question how people live by their marginality, whilst simultaneously empowering themselves. I suggest that it is only by centring the margins, which allows the voices of the marginalised to manifest in their own terms, that we can gain most insight into the politics of identity as they are played out, and the multiple factors intertwined in people's everyday practices.

(Future?) Contributions

As I approached the end of my fieldwork in Dolanji, while at dinner in the guesthouse, one of the monks asked me, "*So, what are you going to do with your research after you leave? Will it contribute to this community?"* I had been asked this question before in the final months of my stay in Dolanji, sometimes by the settlers (most of them second generation), but most often by the monastics. In replying, I usually asked them what they expected me to do with my research, and what kind of contribution they would want me to make to their community. The answers I received were diverse in terms of both monastic and lay responses, and also in terms of the informants' generation.

Most of the first generation laity hoped that I would continue my study of Tibetan and continue to develop my knowledge of the Bon religion. Many of them repeated how very lucky I was to have the chance to stay for so long in Dolanji, and to learn Tibetan and Bon religious studies with their monastics. The elders always told me to study hard, and hoped that the knowledge I had acquired in Dolanji could benefit my life somehow in future. A few second generation Bonpo, who had different experiences and who had sometimes been 'discriminated' against (in the interviewees' terms) by the Buddhist majority, told me that they would be very happy if this research could enable their story to be heard, so that people from other countries, who had never heard of the Bonpo and who had assumed that all Tibetans were Buddhist, might learn of their existence and of the marginalisation that the Bonpo have experienced over past decades. Similar hopes were also mentioned by the monastics. Many of them told me that it would be a positive contribution to let those who might not be practitioners of Bon or Buddhism, know about the Bon religion, and about the significant role that it has played in Tibetan history and culture. Moreover, one particular monastic told me,

> "*This is the most critical time for the Bonpo. Many of the older generation have gone, and many young people now don't see any difference between*

Bon and Buddhism. We are already worried that, outside the monastery, the sense of a distinctive Bon identity may be lost among the younger laity. So if this study can help some young people to become interested in Bon, by realising that even outsiders are interested in their experience of Bon identity, it may bring some positive results".

It is interesting to note that these responses, to a certain extent, reflect the different perceptions of what is most significant about Bonpo identity, according to the individual perspective. For many lay elders, being a Bonpo is embodied in their belief in the Abbot, in their devotion to Menri monastery, and in their involvement in the ceremonies of the monastery. Therefore, from this perspective, to stay close to the Abbot and Menri monastery usually represents the most meritorious way of living this life. For some of the second generation, and for many of the monastics, their experience of Bon identity over the past decades has been deeply coloured by their struggle against the Buddhist hegemony in the discourse of Tibetan national identity. Therefore, for them, the more people throughout the world who know about the importance of Bon to Tibetan identity, the more their negotiations for the place of Bon in the discourse of Tibetan history and culture will be empowered and likely to succeed.

This concern also points to the crucial role played by foreign audiences in the creation of Tibetan nationalism and the development of Bon identity. In this thesis, the influence of foreigners in the life of the Bonpo in Dolanji has been addressed, but requires further development. Since its establishment, foreign sponsors have played an important role in the development of the monastery in Dolanji, and, over the past decade or so, as the number of followers has grown, so too has the significance of foreign sponsorship. The development of Menri monastery, including the extension to the monastic complex and nunnery, and the establishment of the Tibetan Yung Drung Bon Library, has relied heavily on financial support from abroad, via various Bon organisations. Among these organisations, those in America, for example, the Bon Foundation (established in 1989 in the United States), described by the Bonpo monks as being '*big sponsors*', have become the main patrons for the maintenance of the Bon identity in exile.

Apart from providing financial support, many of these institutions also organise activities, such as religious teachings and retreats, to enable Bonpo monastics to

impart their knowledge of Bon to foreign audiences. This raises the question of how the Bonpo interact with their foreign patrons, how these organisations and their members introduce Bon and the Bonpo to the audiences in their societies, and how the involvement of these foreign agencies has affected the Bonpo's discourse on their religious and national identity in past years.

I suggest that a focus on the interaction between the Bonpo exiles and their foreign patrons will bring us to rethink the interconnection between power and the making of knowledge about Bon, as it occurs at an international level, and take a closer look at the contradictions which are evident in the Bonpo's negotiation of religious and national identity with different audiences. This thesis has reflected on the importance of foreign agencies in maximizing the impact of Bonpo negotiations over their political and social status, with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. However, the nature of the relationship between the Bonpo and their foreign sponsors is far more complex, given the great variety of purposes and motives involved, and the involvement of different political, social and economic factors. Therefore, I suggest that the role played by foreign agencies in the way that Bonpo construct their discourses on religious identity, requires a separate and more detailed investigation, which may entail a multi-sited and transnational research plan. It is therefore likely that this insight will form the basis of an extended project in the future.

This thesis is only a starting point, from which I have attempted to draw attention to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the academic discourse of anthropology and Tibetology, as they relate to a marginalised group within the Tibetan refugee population, and thus enable us to rethink the dynamics and diversity embodied in the life of Tibetans in exile. There are still many issues and dimensions which have not yet been fully explored in this thesis, due to methodological limitations, but which can form the basis of future research. For example, how have the Bonpo who have settled in other Tibetan settlements interacted with their Buddhist neighbours, and how do they engage with the discourse on religious and national identity as articulated by the Bonpo monastics in Dolanji? Also, it is important to look at how the Bonpo in Dolanji interact with other Bon communities, including those who had lived for centuries in the Himalayan area and those dispersed in other countries. We must take into account the diverse historical contexts, as well as the different relationships which may exist between the refugee communities and their host

societies. Given the nature of Bon religious beliefs, and the important role played by the Abbot and by Menri monastery in Dolanji, it will be interesting to investigate how the monastics and laity of other Bon communities perceive each other, and how important transnational networks have been to the practice of Bon identity and the promotion of 'Bon traditions' among these communities.

This thesis has argued that identity involves communications between two sides, and that negotiation between a majority and a minority, and between the dominant and the marginalised, is a 'dialogical interaction'. Therefore, the findings of this thesis also aim to contribute to future studies on how the Buddhist population in Tibetan communities perceive the Bon religion, and how they interact with the Bonpo. I believe that, based on the findings of this research, which has explored the ways in which Bonpo negotiate official knowledge and education, it will be equally important to investigate the ways that Buddhist monastics and laity view knowledge of Bon, how it is represented in today's textbooks, and their responses to the importance placed on Bon in statements made by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Furthermore, as mentioned in the Introduction and Chapter IV, there are still religious minorities, for example, Tibetan Muslims, who have received little attention by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Compared to the Bonpo, who have negotiated for the inclusion of their religious identity in the official discourse of Tibetan nationalism, the Muslim population have yet to be formally accepted by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and may face even more difficulties than the Bonpo in negotiating their religious legitimacy within Tibetan national identity. This raises the question of how they live their marginality at the periphery of Tibetan societies, both inside Tibet and in exile, and how they perceive the Buddhist-centred Tibetan national identity. Few academics have given attention to the other minority groups found in Tibetan refugee communities, and few have sought to understand whether or not their lives have been significantly affected by the marginality applied to them by Tibetan nationalism. I hope this thesis can help to raise attention both within and out with academia, to the lives lived by the variety of non-Buddhist minorities within the Tibetan population.

Finally, echoing what I referred to at the beginning of this thesis, much of the anthropological research into refugees and the marginalised has neglected the fact that they may also participate in reproducing the discourse of dominance-marginality, and simultaneously reinforce the centre-margin dynamic of a given society. Therefore, I hope that this thesis, which is centred on the stories of the marginalised within the marginal, has contributed to drawing academic attention to the interconnections between power and knowledge. Also, to the fact that researchers must be aware of who they represent, and who they might be leaving out of their representations.

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Appendices

A. Cyclic Rituals at Menri Monastery in Dolanji[74]

Tibetan Month [75]	Tibetan Date	Cyclic Rituals	Duration
1	3	*bsang gsol* (ritual of purification)	1 days
1	4-5	Birth anniversary of Nyame Sherab Gyaltsen (*mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshen*), the founder and first abbot of Menri Monastery	2 days
1	First Sunday	The Cham (*'cham*) festival	1 day
1	6-16	Geshe Degree Ceremonies (on every alternate year)[76]	11 days
1	14-16	Birth anniversary of Lord Tonpa Shenrab, the founder of Bon	3 days
1	21-22	Death anniversary of *kyung sprul* Rinpoche	2 days
1	23-30	Seven-day retreat of the wisdom deity (*smra ba'i seng ge*)	8 days
3	21	Death anniversary of Menri Monastery's previous head teacher, Yongzin Sangye Tenzin	1 day
3	22	Death anniversary of Tsondu Gyaltsen (*brtshon 'grus rgyal mtshan*)	1 day
5	14-16	Annual *mkha' klong gsang mdos* ritual	3 days
6	6	Death anniversary of Nyame Sherab Gyaltsen	1 day
6	10	Prayers in Menri Monastery's guardian temple	1 day
6	14-15	*zhi khro* ritual	2 days
7	14-15	Death anniversary of Sherab Tenpai Gyaltsen, the 9th abbot of Yungdrung Ling monastery	2 days
7	28	Death anniversary of Sherab Lodro, the 32nd abbot of Menri monastery	1 day
8	1-7	Seven-day *dka' thub* ritual (ascetic fasting)	7 days
9	15	Mucho Demdrug (*mu cho ldem drug*), the foremost disciple of Tonpa Shenrab, visited Olmo Lung-ring from heaven	1 day
10	30	Death anniversary of Lord Tonpa Shenrab	1 day
11	7-8	Death anniversary of Dawa Gyaltsen, the first abbot of Yungdrung Ling monastery	2 days
12	27-29	*dgu gtor chen mo*: end of year ritual for averting negative spiritual forces before the New Year starts	3 days

[74] Provided by the monastics from Menri monastery in 2007-2008, with reference to the article 'The Festivals' (*dus chen*) (1993) in the annual journal of Bon-sGo (*bon sgo*).

[75] The Tibetan Calendar follows the lunar system. The first month of the Tibetan Calendar normally starts during February in the Western (solar based) Calendar.

[76] The *Geshe* degree is equivalent to a PhD degree, and represents the culmination of study at a Bon Dialectic School.

B. Statements of the Cabinet (Kashag) of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile[77]

1. The 48th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, 10 March 2007

Today, on this momentous occasion of the 48th anniversary of the peaceful uprising of the Tibetan people in their struggle for their freedom, the Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration remembers and salutes those brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of Tibet, and those who are still suffering. The Kashag also extends its warm greetings to all Tibetans in and outside Tibet.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama always counsels all Tibetans to hope for the best, and prepare for the worst, which is a very valuable piece of advice that all Tibetans in and outside Tibet must take it to heart. Within the past six decades or so, unheard-of damage has been done to Tibet and its inhabitants, and the unprecedented political tragedy has brought Tibetans, their religion and culture to the verge of extinction. Given China's huge population, its political, economic and military power, the issue of Tibet should have been extinguished long ago. However, on the contrary, because of the sanctity of the Tibetan tradition and through the grace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetan culture and religion has flourished all over the world, and receives solidarity and support from people everywhere. Consequently, the issue of Tibet is coming closer to a resolution.

Particularly, the polity of exiled Tibetans has been transformed into a genuine democracy which has strengthened the structure of the administration. Since all the supreme heads of the religious traditions are thriving in exile, their foresight and guidance have not only helped us in the effective management of our religion and culture, but also afforded every young Tibetan in exile the opportunity to benefit from both traditional and modern education. Moreover, we are in the process of implementing a basic education policy in the Tibetan schools in exile. It is commendable that exiled Tibetans living elsewhere, while securing their future, work dedicatedly and tirelessly towards our common cause. And more importantly, Tibetans living inside Tibet, despite suffering unthinkable hardship, continue to pledge their deep faith and belief in His Holiness the Dalai Lama and are able to sustain and make known the unique culture of the Tibetan people to the world, with courage and determination. This is also a matter of pride. This is because of the grace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and thus, we offer our gratitude along with our prayers for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, so that he may live for hundreds of eons.

The year 2007 (Fire-Pig Year) is significant as His Holiness has completed six full cycles of 12 zodiac signs, which is auspicious although potentially ominous. In order to remove any unforeseen obstacles, a series of prayers based on divine prophecy and Tibetan astrology will be performed. In addition to this, on the 25th day of the first Tibetan lunar month, the 14 March 2007, all Tibetans in and outside Tibet will make a long-life prayer offering to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Kashag, therefore, requests that all Tibetans and friends of Tibet, across the world, engage in meritorious activities and pray for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and for the fulfilment of all his wishes.

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[77] These are the English versions of Cabinet statements released on the official website of the CTA: http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php (2007-2008).

Traditional Tibetan cultural heritage has spread all over the world and is in no imminent danger of extinction, but political repression and the immigration of large numbers of other nationalities into Tibet, continues to undermine the Tibetan race, culture and language. At this time, all Tibetans inside Tibet, both clergy and laity, should be more concerned than ever and should continue to make all efforts to protect their homeland. The younger generation should strive to become educated, and take particular care to impart traditional Tibetan education. So far, many schools and training centres have been established and managed across Tibet, and such contributions are greatly appreciated. It is also encouraging to see that such works will be carried out in future with the same fervour.

Likewise, the maintenance of the purity of the Tibetan race, and the importance of maintaining a healthy mind and body, are important national issues for all Tibetans. Because of the burgeoning immorality lately evident in Tibetan towns and cities, pandemics such as AIDS, tuberculosis and cancer are increasing, being conditions which are hard to treat. Care should therefore be taken to prevent such modern diseases occurring.

For the survival of the Tibetan nationality and its traditions, it is important to protect the natural environment, forests, medicinal plants, wildlife, birds species, etc., and the beautiful biodiversity of the Tibetan plateau, and to ensure its continued sustainability by not polluting the ecology. Care should also be taken to preserve the major rivers which originate in the Tibetan plateau, with their tributaries which flow down into so many countries, as well as our streams, lakes, ponds and springs, all of which hold the purest water in the world. We should ensure they do not become depleted due to pollution and misuse. Likewise, the protection and conservation of historically significant monasteries and temples, statues, sacred religious scriptures, shrines, monuments, heritage sites and artefacts must also be ensured, so that, along with our natural resources, they may also be used for the benefit of the Tibetan people. Indeed, these principles are enshrined in the national regional autonomy law. Tibetans in Tibet should thus shoulder these responsibilities as they have done in the past.

Exiled Tibetans are not driven out of their nation by natural disasters, but rather as political refugees. We thus have a responsibility to carry on the struggle on behalf of the Tibetan people. Needless to say, every individual Tibetan living in a free country should act as a spokesperson for their six million fellow Tibetans languishing under oppression. We have to strive on every front to make people all over the world aware of Tibetan religion and culture, its political history, present status and future aspirations. Also we should maintain our cultural traditions and language, to promote traditional Tibetan wisdom and to emulate and absorb the virtues of modern education and society, and especially, to study and understand the concept of democracy thoroughly and work towards applying it to our experience in exile, to make our democratic society in exile truly stable and sustainable.

Similarly, to avoid regional factionalism and religious sectarianism, we should unite under the supreme leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and harbour a deep belief and confidence in the mutually beneficial Middle-Way Approach and non-violence, as means by which we can maintain our unity in the midst of our struggles, however long they take. Until and unless the Tibetan issue is resolved, we must have the determination, courage and dynamism to carry forward our struggle and keep it alive. Truth and non-violence are our strength, which need to be safeguarded. If we can do this, the peoples of the world will back us, for truth always prevails in the end.

Within the Tibetan community in and outside Tibet, there are quite a number of Shugden practitioners who continue in their practices without having proper understanding or knowledge. However, as a result of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's spiritual advice, the number of practitioners has significantly reduced and is now negligible. Nevertheless, for the past several years, officials of the People's Republic of China have forced Tibetans to propitiate the Shugden deity, for reasons of political gain. These Shugden propitiators are paid in cash and kind, and are being employed to carry out various activities aimed at hampering the long-term interests of the Tibetan people. Plans seem to have been made to increase the use of Shugden practitioners in campaigns across Tibet and China, aimed at opposing and vilifying His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Hence, what was merely an issue of blind faith has now been turned into a malicious political exercise. We Tibetans must not be careless about this and must always be alert in order to challenge the situation when needed.

Since 2002, the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and their counterparts from the People's Republic of China have had five rounds of dialogue, which has enabled us to understand each other's position and to express the aspirations of the Tibetan people. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is sincerely willing to continue the dialogue process further, but to our surprise and dismay, from last May, local officials from Lhasa, in addition to personnel from the central United Front Work Department, began launching a series of baseless, derogatory and irresponsible remarks against His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in objection to the Middle-Way Approach. This has disappointed all Tibetans and negatively affected the dialogue process. It is hard to assess the reasons behind such a sudden outburst. However, according to various sources, it seems to be due to the popular support for His Holiness' spiritual advice on the propitiation of deities, and his appeal for Tibetans to stop the use of hides and fur from endangered species in Tibet. Many sensible Chinese have appreciated and acknowledged their support for the Middle-Way Approach, as a mutually beneficial policy for both Tibetans and Chinese, and this is perhaps another reason why the attack was launched. If this is the case, and if it was intended to provoke a similar response from the Central Tibetan Administration, then this merely reflects their narrow-mindedness.

The essence of the Middle-Way Approach is to have genuine national regional autonomy, in letter and spirit, within the constitutional framework of the People's Republic of China. These aims remain utterly unchanged, as we have made clear time and again. The two points on which we will not compromise regarding the future status of Tibet, are: firstly, since historical events are issues of past, they will not form the basis for resolving the future status of Tibet; secondly, our aspiration for a single administration for all Tibetans. We have made this clear on a number of occasions and are reiterating it once again. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration acknowledge the need to resolve the issue of Tibet through dialogue with concerned officials from the People's Republic of China, within the framework of the constitution. Therefore, we have always maintained faith in dialogue despite many setbacks. In the international community, there are many justice-loving, sensible individuals who engage themselves in activities that support issues of human rights, religion and culture, environmental protection, justice and equality and so forth. Likewise, numerous educated people in the international community also support and are in solidarity with the Tibetan cause, motivated solely out of a positive human concern for the promotion of world peace, and not from a desire to ‘internationalise’ the Tibet issue. It is needless to say that if the issue of Tibet could be resolved mutually through dialogue, the international outcry for Tibet would automatically

disappear. To put it in a nutshell, whatever changes may occur in the actions and speeches of officials of the People's Republic of China, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration will remain steadfast on the Middle-Way Approach.

The sooner the issue of Tibet reaches a satisfactory conclusion, the better it is for both the Tibetans and Chinese. Thus, we are doing all that is in our means in order to reach a solution. Moreover, we will make every endeavour toward the continuation of dialogue in the future, and are, as always, determined to create an atmosphere conducive to such a dialogue. Even if the Tibetan struggle continues for many years, Tibetans inside and outside Tibet will strive to keep the struggle alive from generation to generation with firm determination and courage, until it is resolved. Moreover, it is apparent to all that we have already in place a sound administration and a complete plan of action to carry forward the Tibetan struggle. Though the People's Republic of China may continue to fail to resolve the Tibet issue through peaceful negotiation, His Holiness and the Central Tibetan Administration certainly cannot be held responsible for their failure.

The Kashag would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of Tibetans inside and outside of Tibet, to convey our gratitude to the Indian populace and to the officials of the Central and State governments, for their warm hospitality throughout these long years. The Kashag would also like to show its gratitude to the justice and peace loving international community for their concern towards the Tibetan cause.

May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live for hundreds of eons and all His wishes be spontaneously fulfilled! May the truth of the issue of Tibet also prevail soon!

2. The 49th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, 10 March 2008

Today, 10 March 2008, is the 49th anniversary of the Tibetan people's peaceful uprising for their freedom. On this occasion, the Kashag pays its tribute to those heroic men and women of Tibet who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of the Tibetan people, as well as express our solidarity with those Tibetans who are presently suffering under Chinese repression. The Kashag also extends its greetings to all the Tibetans in and outside Tibet

In the previous 10 March statement of the 13th Kashag, we dwelt, among other things, on the status of the Tibetan people, the structure of the Tibetan administration in exile, plans to sustain the Tibetan struggle should it drag on for a long time, the role of Tibetans in and outside Tibet and on the status of the Sino-Tibetan dialogue. While reiterating all these points, the Kashag would like to express its appreciation for those Tibetans who have, in the recent period, undertaken numerous activities in Tibet, activities that are both peaceful and law-abiding, with sincerity and courage for the benefit and the protection of the Tibetan religion and culture. All Tibetans, be it monks, lay people, young or elderly and particularly the majority of the communist party cadres and civil servants in Tibet, who are always in a state of great fear, intimidation and suspicion, have been able to keep alive, with great courage, the Tibetan spirit and their ultimate hope for the resolution of the Tibet issue. While acknowledging and appreciating this remarkable quality, the Kashag as well as the entire exile Tibetan community firmly believe that this Tibetan spirit will continue to remain in the future as well.

Similarly last year, many governments and countries across the world, who have great faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama and who are concerned about the issue of Tibet, have carried out a number of activities which reflected their support for us Tibetans. The Kashag, on behalf of all the Tibetans in and outside Tibet, would like to express heartfelt thanks to all of them.

The mutually beneficial Middle-Way Approach, which is envisioned by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, has been framed into policy with the support of the great majority of Tibetans in and outside Tibet. This was further unanimously supported by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. On the basis of this policy, dialogue with the Chinese government is on going. Subsequently six rounds of talks have been conducted since 2002. These talks have been helpful to us in clarifying our respective positions. These talks have also benefited the international community and Tibetans in Tibet. However, no concrete results have been achieved on the fundamental issue of Tibet. Moreover there is, today, a heightened repression in Tibet and an increasing campaign of vilification against His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We are extremely disappointed by these unfortunate developments.

In the course of these exchanges, we have categorically stated to the Chinese government that we do not have any hidden agenda or issues, other than the basic demand that they should implement the conditions for National Regional Autonomy as set forth in the constitution of the People's Republic of China, by granting a meaningful self-rule for all Tibetans under a single administration. We have also made it very clear that this demand is in line with the legitimate rights of all the minority nationalities. Based on the present reality, this demand is only a means to accomplish the future aspirations of both Tibet and China; it is not something that is based on the past history of Tibet.

History is a set of records of past happenings that cannot be amended. However, no independent countries or autonomous regions have remained unchanged from the past. There is also no reason for this to be the case. For example, the current scope of the sovereign power and

territorial boundaries of the People's Republic of China is unprecedented in terms of its history over the centuries prior to 1949. Insisting on history as a means to decide the prospects of the future is simply to indulge in a blame game, or a way of finding excuses. It is not at all in tune with reality. Since we are not stubbornly clinging to the idea that the future of the Tibetan people should be based only on our version of history, the gap in the Tibetan and Chinese viewpoints on this issue is not unbridgeable.

Since National Regional Autonomy has been of benefit to individual minority nationalities, it should be uniformly granted to all Tibetans. There is no reason for scattering them. There is also no need to follow a historical basis on this matter. In a nutshell, if the future of the Tibetan people were to be decided on the basis of its past history, then there is no way that the Middle-Way policy could be adhered to.

The problem of Tibet is neither restricted to the issue of His Holiness the Dalai Lama nor simply concerned with the benefit of the Tibetans in exile alone. This is universally known. Currently the situation of the Tibetan people inside Tibet is not at all satisfactory. Anybody can see this. Therefore, for the happiness of all Tibetans and for the preservation of their national identity, language, customs, culture and the traditional sciences, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the organisations of the Tibetan Diaspora, both based in a free country, have the responsibility to act as the spokespersons for Tibetans in and outside Tibet. To do so is, in fact, their historical responsibility. Due to the reasons cited above, and with Tibet's sovereignty aside, both the Tibetan and Chinese sides have to accept the truth of the main issue at hand - the welfare of the Tibetan people.

Since the restoration of direct contact with the Chinese government in 2002, no positive change has taken place in Tibet. Moreover the Chinese authorities have taken, and are continuing to take, action that can be described as inhuman. Beside the fact that there has been heightened repression and brutality in Tibet since 2006, baseless accusations are being hurled against His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Innocent Tibetans in general, and particularly the monks and nuns, are exposed to unlimited restrictions and harassment under the pretext of patriotic re-education. Despite being an atheist state, the Chinese government has interfered in religious affairs by issuing a decree on the recognition of *Trulkus*. It is also using a number of the Dholgyal propitiators as a tool by which to separate the Tibetan people. Those who express their honest views in a non-violent and peaceful manner are beaten and incarcerated. These are the actions of true separatists who seek to uproot the co-operation between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples. Harmony and unity should be created through mutual trust and by unifying minds. There is no historical precedent for a unity enforced through repression being sustained. Neither will it be sustained in the future. The recent developments in Tibet have greatly harmed the environment of the Sino-Tibetan dialogue. The Chinese government's assertion that it attaches importance to the current process of dialogue also appears to be nothing more than empty talk. Consequently, it has made it more difficult for the exile Tibetan administration to guide Tibetans in and outside Tibet to abide by the Middle-Way policy.

So far the Chinese government has not given a definite response to the demands put across by the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the sixth round of talks. Therefore, it is doubtful whether the Chinese side is really willing to resolve the current problems of Tibet. However, the Kashag will not change its current policy on the Middle-Way Approach, irrespective of whether or not the dialogue with the present leadership of the People's Republic

of China will lead to any solution on the issue of Tibet. We are firmly committed to the continuance of the ongoing dialogue process with the Chinese government.

Employing numerous channels, the different agencies of the Chinese government have been sending a variety of contradictory signals to us. However, unless we receive a clear and unambiguous message through a recognised official channel, there is no way that we can respond to these signals.

Following the objections raised by many highly-realised and recognised spiritual masters of the earlier period, including the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Trichen Ngawang Chokden, Changkya Rolpai Dorjee, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, etc., His Holiness has very kindly advised us against the propitiation of Dholgyal, on numerous occasions. However, a few monastic institutions of the Gelug tradition have still not clarified their positions on this issue, as a result of which the propitiators and non-propitiators of Dholgyal live together under the same roof. A broad section of the enlightened monks has, therefore, expressed their views through a number of campaign activities, urging that this matter be resolved once and for all. As such, during his recent visit to Mundgod, South India, His Holiness the Dalai Lama suggested to the Gelug monastic institutions, that for the future convenience of all concerned a referendum among the monks must be conducted. The responsible authorities of the monastic institutions unanimously supported the idea and a referendum was conducted based on the Buddhist Vinaya system, of voting by administering *Tsul-shings* (Sangha voting sticks). Subsequently, most of the Gelug monastic institutions, including the three Great Monastic Seats, have disassociated themselves completely from the Dholgyal propitiators. While expressing our appreciation for this, the Kashag would like to urge the monastic world not be negligent on this matter in the future. There still exist a tiny number of monks who are not able to stop the propitiation of Dholgyal. Since they cannot live within the compounds of the Great Monastic Seats, they should move out to live separately elsewhere. Towards this end, the Central Tibetan Administration will provide them necessary assistance, as we provide to all Tibetans.

The Kashag would like to express its heartfelt thanks to the government and people of India, for providing unmatched assistance and shelter to all the Tibetan exiles over the last almost fifty years. The Kashag would like to urge that, as a way of expressing our gratitude, the Tibetan exiles should contribute to, and assist in, the religious and cultural spheres of the host country as much as they can. Similarly, the Kashag would like to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to the justice and peace-loving governments and peoples across the world, for supporting the issue of Tibet.

Finally, the Kashag prays for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the immediate resolution of the issue of Tibet. The Kashag also prays that the day may dawn soon, when Tibetans in and outside Tibet will join in celebration of their re-unification.

3. The 72nd Birthday Celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 6 July 2007

On this occasion of the 72nd birthday celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration -- on behalf of Tibetans in and outside Tibet as well as all his followers across the globe -- makes its obeisance to His Holiness and prays that he may live for hundreds of aeons as the true protector of humanity as a whole, and continue his meritorious service towards them.

Today is a very auspicious day, because on this day that a new sun in the form of a supreme Guide has appeared before not just the inhabitants of the Snowland, but also the peoples of the entire planet on which we live. As such, the day -- a moment of great festivity -- is being observed by a countless number of people with enormous joy, devotion and respect across the globe. Today also marks the first birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama that has been celebrated during the tenure of the 13th Kashag. Therefore, the Kashag -- with unwavering devotion and respect to His Holiness the Dalai Lama -- would like to implore him to continue providing guidance to the Administration as before, in the discharging of all its religious and political duties and responsibilities during the remaining years of its term. The Kashag, in particular, would like to make supplication today to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, that he may never announce his intention to go into semi-retirement, or, in the future, take complete retirement.

This year -- Fire-Hog Year according to the Tibetan Lunar Calendar -- is the actual obstacle year for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. And yet His Holiness has continued, and is continuing, to bless the entire world with his meritorious service, the magnitude of which is time-effacing like the movement of the sun and the moon as well as the waves of the ocean. While expressing our immense gratitude and sincere appreciation for this, the Kashag would like to beseech him to continue his great service towards humanity in the future as well. Following the divinations of the protective deities and the highest-ranking lamas belonging to all the religious traditions of Tibet, the High-level Prayer Committee for the Obstacle Year of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, headed by the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, have performed a series of prayer services in order to dispel ominous signs standing in the way of His Holiness's good health, the list of which is attached here for his kind perusal. We would like to request His Holiness the Dalai Lama to offer his prayers for the merits gained from this good karma, as well as from the collective good karma accumulated by all of us, including the highly-realised beings over the period of the three times, to serve as the cause of His Holiness' longevity, the perpetuation of his meritorious work, and as a consequence of it all, to serve as the cause for the immediate resolution of the issue of Tibet.

The Kashag would like to make an emphatic appeal to Tibetans in and outside Tibet, for them to make every effort -- until the obstacle year for His Holiness is well passed -- towards engaging themselves in merit-earning activities, observing internal harmony and enhancing the collective merit of the Tibetan people in the true tradition of the spiritual bond and devotion that goes with the tutor-disciple relationship. All the civil servants, senior and junior, of the Central Tibetan Administration, are particularly requested to make all efforts in their assigned jobs in order to fulfil the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This is, in fact, the biggest gift we can offer to him.

In keeping with the profound desire of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the process of dialogue with the government of the People's Republic of China is still underway, based on the

mutually-beneficial policy of the Middle-Way Approach that has support of the majority of Tibetans in and outside Tibet, as well as the unanimous support of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. However since May last year, owing to the attitude -- both in terms of speech and action -- adopted by some of the concerned officials of the People's Republic of China, the atmosphere for a meaningful dialogue has not only greatly deteriorated, but the sixth round of talks has also had to be postponed for quite a long time. Nevertheless, the Tibetan Delegation led by the Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama left for China on 29 June and returned to India yesterday afternoon, having conducted the sixth round of talks with the authorities concerned. We are following the outcomes of this round of talks with great interest.

The majority of the Tibetan people have little hope that the present Chinese authorities will effect a positive change on the issue of Tibet. While this view is no doubt based on reality, it is not the way of a person of intelligence, to be encumbered by such a view and thus resign oneself to a state of helplessness or hopelessness. We must understand that it is the unavoidable responsibility of all Tibetans -- a responsibility placed on us by destiny -- to expend all our energy in creating a situation whereby the Chinese authorities are compelled to bring about a positive change. The Tibetan issue has, thus far, not disappeared from the international stage. China is also not able to ignore it altogether. They at least have to respond to us. This is due to the strength of the non-violent path of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. If the Tibetan people are able to promote this "strength" in all sincerity, then all sensible people will bear witness to the fact that there is no force in the world that can challenge it. Therefore, should you consider yourself as one concerned with the cause of Tibetan nationality, you must, from the core of your heart, believe in and practise the mutually-beneficial policy of the Middle-Way Approach, as well as the non-violent and peaceful methods by which it may be realised.

Under present global conditions, it is certainly not impossible that the Tibetan issue may take a long time to reach a resolution. As such, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has now and again guided us that we should hope for the best and prepare for the worst -- a great and meaningful piece of advice indeed. It is needless to say, therefore, that we should be able to continue the struggle of the Tibetan people -- even if it drags on for hundreds of years -- without showing any signs of laxity or faint-heartedness. For this to happen, it is not enough simply to show emotions or engage in discourse. Every single Tibetan should, according to his or her intellectual or other capabilities, initiate action on a daily basis. Many Tibetans are not able to discern the many ways -- other than protest demonstrations, public meetings and rallies – by which they can take action in their daily lives. Due to a number of reasons, including a lack of diligence on the part of the general Tibetan populace, they face the problem of not knowing how to accomplish their aims, although their sincerity is unquestionable. Some even go to the extent of finding excuses to blame the Administration by misconstruing the latter's appeal for creating a conducive environment for dialogue as form of non-action, or excuse for initiating any action at all. Taking into consideration all these issues, the Kashag would like to take the opportunity of His Holiness' birthday to emphatically urge Tibetans in general, and the exiled Tibetans in particular, to carry out the following 11-point plan of action to serve as an example to generate ideas:

Religious and Cultural Front

1. In order to dispel the collective bad karma, and enhance the collective merit, of the Tibetan people, engage in as much merit-earning activity as possible. And in particular, recite these prayers on a regular basis: *Tsigdun soldeb, Gurui thugdam neikul, Densol montsig, Soldeb denpei ngadra* and *Gongsa choggi shadten soldeb.*

2. Provide religious, cultural and educational assistance to, and establish close relations with, the people living in the Himalayan region who are similar to Tibet in respect of their religion, culture and language, including the ancient followers of Tibetan Buddhism such as the Mongolians and Chinese, as well as those who have recently embraced Tibetan Buddhism.

Educational Front

3. Work towards preserving the language, traditional sciences, customs and beliefs as well as the good nature of the Tibetan people in every household. In addition to ensuring that the Tibetan youths pursue a high level of education in Tibetan language, religion and culture, provide them with a standard modern education, so that they may become specialists in the various fields of human endeavour. Feed them with daily information about the history of Tibet, and particularly the extent of damage caused to the land and people of Tibet since its occupation by the People's Republic of China.

Social Front

4. For the sustenance of the Tibetan nationality -- already small in terms of population -- and to empower it, the lay community should give special attention to the upbringing of their children and actively practice mother and child healthcare.
5. Tibetans in general, and in particular the Tibetan youths, should -- as well as urging other to do so -- refrain from substance abuse and other unethical or bad habits, to ensure their mental and physical wellbeing, as well as strive towards becoming a good Tibetan.
6. Those who have acquired citizenship in their host country should visit Tibet as many times as possible, and assist the Tibetans there in the fields of education, health, etc.

Political Front

7. Establish contacts with the general public and important dignitaries in the place where you reside -- city, provincial or state level -- and initiate Tibet awareness campaigns by educating them about the true status of Tibet and the Tibetans. This effort should be aimed at dispelling the misconceptions created by untruthful Chinese propaganda, and not for internationalising the Tibetan issue.
8. Establish contacts with the overseas Chinese, and particularly with the students, businessmen and tourists coming from mainland China, and initiate Tibet awareness campaigns by educating them about the Tibetan issue and correcting their misconceptions. Tibetans in exile should also develop relationships, and engage in talks or exchanges, with the people in Tibet and China, including intellectuals, with the help of modern technologies such as the Internet and email.
9. Do not give credence to any rumours that harm the unity and cohesive force of the Tibetan exile community; always make a thorough analysis, whatever the issue may be. Ensure in particular that nepotism of any kind, including those based on religious, provincial or regional grounds, does not take place. Make efforts toward clearing all misunderstandings between the Tibetan administration and the general public as well as among the different institutions and individuals, so that the Tibetan people's collective energy can be concentrated on the furtherance of the Tibetan issue, and that the efforts

of the other side to create discord within the Tibetan community may be rendered ineffective.

Economic Front

10. Organise workshops, debates, discussions and brainstorming sessions for public and privately-run Tibetan institutions on the theme of the Middle-Way policy -- a policy laid down by the Tibetan administration as well as the general Tibetan populace -- and the means by which it may be implemented.
11. Without forgetting the overall situation of the Tibetan people, and in particular our status as refugees, all concerned -- be it Tibetan communities, institutions or individuals rich and poor -- should strive towards a more stable way of life in the future by adopting a rightful livelihood, devoid of the two extremes; and by shunning extravagance of any kind, including the massive display of wealth and unbridled consumerism. You are also encouraged to set aside a portion of your income, or expenses, on a monthly or yearly basis and save the amount in a nearby bank under permanent account heads, so that these may be utilised for the future welfare programmes of the Tibetans as a whole, and for the development of a new Tibet.

These are actions which each and every one of us is capable of -- and should be doing. Therefore the Kashag would like to urge all of you to put these into practice.

Finally, I pray for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the spontaneous fulfilment of all his wishes. May the truth of the issue of Tibet prevail soon!

C. Statements Made by the Dalai Lama in Dolanji, 2007[78]

1. Speech in the Opening Ceremony of the Tibetan Yung Drung Bon Library, 22nd April 2007

"To followers of our native religion [pha ma'i chos], to the Menri Trizin of Yungdrung Bon monastery, Lopon, scholars, monks, and sponsors, to all of you I now announce that the Menri Library is established in exile!

I thank all of you for your efforts in establishing this library. Led by Menri Trizin, this library contains texts on the teachings of Sutra and Tantra, and in particular, it has collected together texts from the five religious traditions. I thank you [Menri Trizin] for your great efforts and hard work in maintaining these great teachings here.

I pray that the pure traditions of Tonpa Shenrab may be successful. It is the responsibility of all Tibetans to support and help the teachings of Bon. Please keep in close contact with us, especially with the Department of Religion and Culture, whose Minister is here today. Our main responsibility, during our time in exile, is to protect Yungdrung Bon, which existed in our ancestors' time in Tibet. The Bon religion is our native religion [pha ma'i chos]. If we need to find the history of Tibet, it can be found only in the Bon texts. We cannot find it in Buddhist texts. That is why the Bon religion is very important for us. So make efforts to preserve your religion. I pray that in future the Bon teachings which you preserve here will be spread across the world.

The ritual performed in this library contained profound and beneficial meanings [referring to the Bon texts which the Dalai Lama had read with the Abbot]. The only thing I felt troubled with was using this Bonpo bell, which I found very hard to do [laughter…]."

[78] These speeches are oral translations made by the Bonpo monks from Menri monastery, 2007.

2. Speech to the Settlement Population, 22nd April 2007

"I am happy to be here again with Menri Trizin, and all the great masters, scholars, monastics and laity. It has been almost 20 years since my first visit in Dolanji. On my visit this time, I found that the monastery has improved greatly, not only in terms of its buildings and architecture, but also in the monastic education it offers. The heart of the religious teaching is to ensure that monks are morally upright and committed to their vows. You impressed me with the quality of your education on my first visit, and do so again this time.

Regarding the school, it seems that all is well in terms of the report given by the settlement representative. I am pleased to see that you have all been working hard to improve conditions in the settlement, and that many sponsors have also been involved with this task. The most important thing you should all bear in mind is to build a good relationship with the local Indians and officials. From what I have observed, you already have a good relationship with the neighbouring Indians. By maintaining a friendly relationship with the surrounding people, the village will be able to receive help in various ways, and thereby improve its situation. I am very pleased by this. I thank all of you for your contributions and all your understanding.

At this critical time for Tibetans living in exile, the fate of Tibet is associated with the Tibetan religions, which provide the path for ultimate liberation. No matter whether you are Buddhist [sangye chos] or Yungdrung Bon, we all believe in the same processes [of compassion and the five paths] which lead to ultimate liberation. The fate of Tibet will be decided by the energy with which we practice our faith. Therefore, we should apply the same mind and faith in working towards saving Tibet. The more effort we make for Tibet, the more merit we will accumulate. So, if we all dedicate merit to the fate of Tibet, through our religious practice, the positive force we create will help ensure a positive future.

We are very rich in culture. The religious philosophy of Yungdrung Bon, akin to Buddhism [sangye pa'i chos], is vast and deep. However, in terms of the development of modern education, we are still very much behind. Building schools has been our top priority since we arrived in exile in 1959. So, go to school [pointing to the students]. That is what you must do.

Take care yourself, I wish you all a very good life!"